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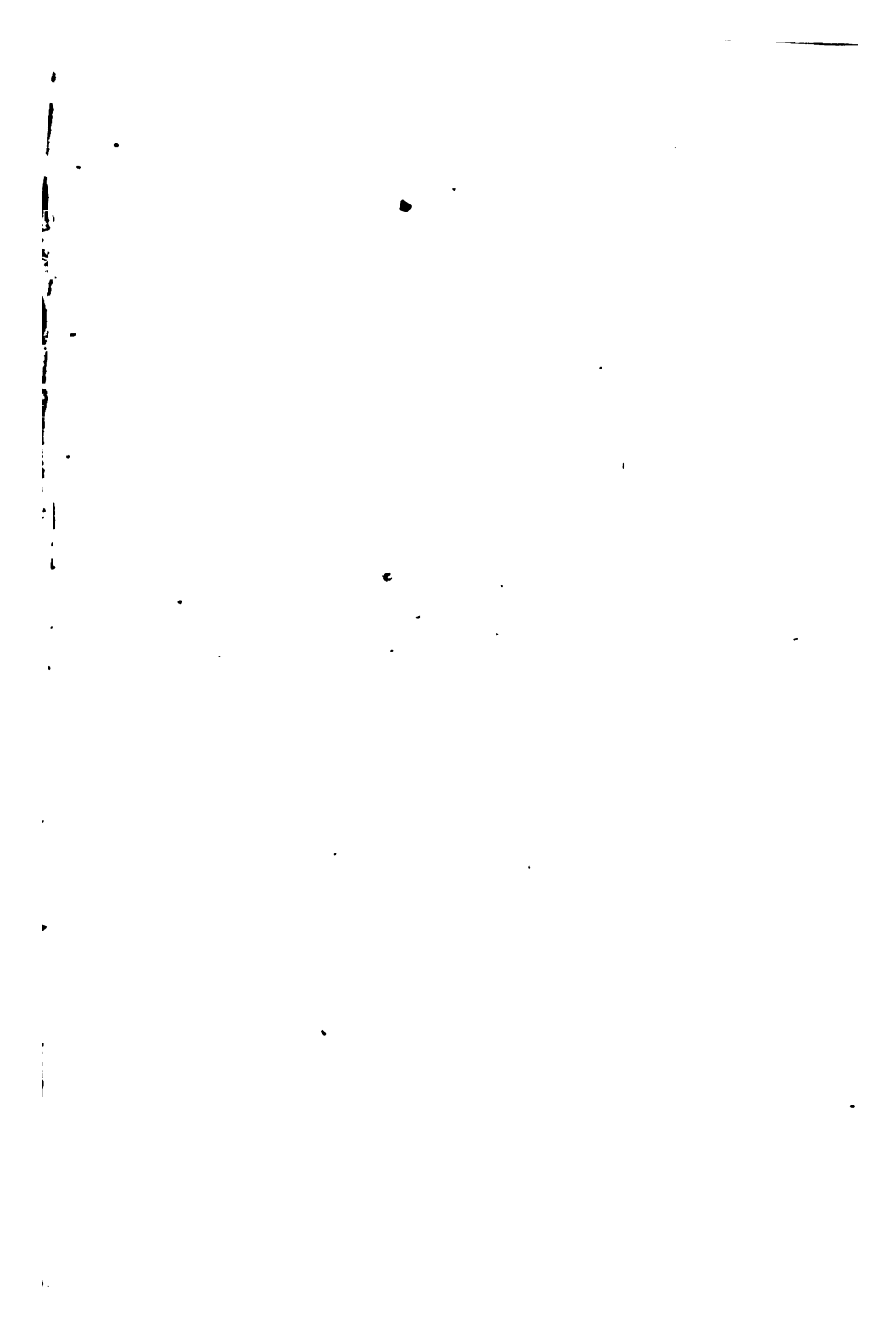
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CONFESSIONS OF AN
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**CONFESSIONS OF AN ENGLISH
OPIUM-EATER.**

THOMAS DE QUINCEY

CONFESSIONS OF AN ENGLISH
OPIUM-EATER

REPRINTED FROM THE FIRST EDITION,
WITH NOTES OF DE QUINCEY'S CONVERSATIONS BY
RICHARD WOODHOUSE, AND OTHER ADDITIONS

EDITED BY
RICHARD GARNETT



LONDON
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ARTHUR STUART WALCOTT

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INTRODUCTION.

IT is not often that the work of a great writer is offered to posterity in another form than that which he finally imparted to it. The departure from this rule in the case of the most celebrated book of so illustrious an author as De Quincey may well be deemed to require apology.

Our plea must be, that while the additions in the second recension of the *Opium-Eater* are biographically interesting, and distinguished by great felicity of diction in particular passages, they are as a whole detrimental to the finish and unity which the original version possesses, and without which it would not be entitled to a place in the series of which the present edition forms a part.

Almost the first condition of such classic completeness is that no portion of the work should

be superfluous. The additions to the *Opium-Eater* are for the most part brilliant superfluities. They are not indeed mere excrescences, and may rather be compared to those excursions and variations into which a musician may be betrayed by consciousness of mastery and pleasure in execution until he has lost sight of his original theme. They convert the brief, pregnant narrative of one episode in a life into a diffuse autobiography.

Of all our great writers De Quincey is the most deficient in concentration. He stands at one end of the scale of which the other is occupied by Landor. If either of these masters of style had indulged the peculiar defect of his quality much further, he would have risked falling into an inferior rank. Even as it is, Landor sometimes repels and De Quincey sometimes fatigues ; but the former's aridity is more compatible with the dignity of a classic than De Quincey's exuberance. If even so perilous a failing as prolixity has not proved fatal to De Quincey, he owes his escape to three things. First, to the stately elaboration of his style, depending for its effect upon an intricacy of composition implying great pomp, and justifying great copiousness of diction. Secondly, to the check imposed upon his redundancy by his pre-

ference for cabinet pieces descriptive of single incidents, or expressive of single ideas. Lastly and perhaps chiefly to the fact that his verbosity is but the reverse side of an intellectual virtue. It is the effect of the exceeding mental fertility and refinement of perception which, so soon as he has given utterance to a thought, suggest a thousand ramifications to be pursued, and a thousand possible misconceptions to be guarded against. Such intellectual subtlety has its charm in argumentative discussion, but is out of place in simple narrative.

When De Quincey penned the Opium-Eater in its original form, all external circumstances conspired to repress his tendency to digression, which everything tended to stimulate when, late in life, he sat down to expand his work. The original Opium-Eater was written for a magazine, the later was designed to form a volume of his collected writings. In the former he was relating events unquestionably interesting to himself, but whose attraction for others remained to be proved. He was an untried writer in sore need of money; he had little capacity for continuous effort, and such effort was neither expected or required by his literary taskmasters. Thirty-five years later he had in a great measure regained the power of consecutive composition,

and had acquired the amiable garrulity of age without losing the exuberance of youth ; he had earned the right to consider his personal history interesting to the world ; and knew that he could never write too much for his publishers, English or American. The latter, indeed, insisted on fathering compositions upon him—The Traditions of the Rabbins—which he could not remember writing, and in fact had not written. No wonder, then, that an entire volume of autobiography should have emerged from the original magazine papers, like the Genie from the vase.

The latitude of expansion which De Quincey has allowed himself will appear from a simple computation. In the original edition of the "Confessions" there are, deducting preliminary matter and the appendix, not subsequently reprinted, 185 pages with an average of 182 words to a page. In the second recension there are 275 pages, each averaging 330 words. The latter, therefore, is nearly three times as long as the former. Are there, then, three times as many incidents recorded ? There is scarcely one new incident. The additional matter is commonly not of the nature of narrative, but of the nature of gloss. For example, in the first edition De Quincey's motive for running

away from school is stated with terse simplicity. "My seventeenth birthday was fast approaching, after which day I had sworn within myself that I would no longer be numbered among schoolboys." The explanation served perfectly well for thirty-five years, but when at last De Quincey sat down to revise his work, it struck him that it stood itself in need of elucidation; and he conjures up antecedent causes in the persons of a schoolmaster who would not allow him time to digest his meals, and "a medical ruffian" who, instead of a blue pill, combated the resulting indigestion with "a horrid mixture that must have suggested itself to him when prescribing for a tiger." Five pages are expended in alternately condemning and acquitting these delinquents, and the countless beauties that spring up during this digression are no adequate compensation for the tediousness and capriciousness of the digression itself. It remains nevertheless enshrined with fifty others in the inviolable asylum of the writer's own deliberate preference; but the earlier and simpler version should be preserved, if only for the sake of comparison with the more recent in those respects in which it falls short of, no less than those in which it excels the latter. While superior in conciseness

and directness of narrative, it is by no means elaborated with the same delicate attention to minutiae of style. Nothing can convey a stronger impression of De Quincey's fastidious refinement as an author than the comparison of the two versions of his works. Few but himself, probably, would have thought that the diction or rhythm of the original "Confessions" needed or admitted of improvement. De Quincey hardly found a sentence entirely in accordance with his own standard. A "miser of sound and syllable," he weighed every word in the balance of an infallible judgment, tested every cadence by a faultless ear, scrutinised every way of rendering punctuation an aid to sense or rhythm, and left almost every sentence somewhat different for his patient toil. The general character of the work is indeed but little affected: nevertheless it may almost be held that, from the point of view of the artist in language, the slighter the alterations, the more worthy they are of attentive study.

In fact the entire *Opium-Eater* is more remarkable for form than substance, for artistic excellence than for the intrinsic value of the material. De Quincey himself compares it to a thyrsus which derives all its beauty from the borrowed leaves and tendrils mantling around

the simple wand. As has been said of the "Autobiographic Sketches," "interwoven with noble thought and gorgeous sentiment, the tissue that at first sight appears poor and threadbare, glows with the warmest and the richest hues." Dazzled and captivated, we can hardly believe that such wealth of genius has been bestowed upon describing and embellishing a not very important episode in the life of a youth. Like the rainbow, what bestrides earth and spans heaven is painted by fleeting light upon unstable water.

It would have been otherwise if the implied promise had been fulfilled, if the "Confessions" had really revealed the secrets of the "ultimate dim Thule" of delirium and dream. In reality, however, we learn but what we knew. We were aware that the use of opium induces reverie; and that the sensations, pleasurable or painful, of one of De Quincey's exquisitely sensitive physical and mental organization, are likely to be of unusual acuteness. This is all we learn from him, unless it be some contribution to the pathology of morbid stimulus to have shown how a single circumstance like the visit of the Malay, strongly seizing upon the imagination, may determine the shape and complexion of a long course of hallucinations.

It is not surprising that the success of his first literary venture should have gained for De Quincey the sobriquet of "the Opium-Eater," and that his name and fame should be so deeply associated with the drug as scarcely to seem capable of independent existence. How little ground really exists for this invincible prepossession appears from the fact that not three-fifths of the original version of the "Opium-Eater" have any reference to opium. Not until page 86 of the little book of 206 pages, is the subject introduced: and, if less copious in high-wrought passages, the preliminary portion contains abundant examples of whatever is characteristic in De Quincey.

Nor is there any ground for regarding his literary idiosyncrasy as due to the habitual use of opium. It exists in Jean Paul, whose inspiration, if the use of stimulants were a necessary condition, should rather be sought in malt and hops. It exists in Jean Paul's disciple, Leopold Schefer, who never heard of De Quincey, but whose descriptions of desperate adventures and gorgeous natural phenomena produce much the same effect in blurring the distinction between sense and thought as De Quincey's impassioned reveries and intricate verbal harmonies. The resemblance pointed out by the

author of "The Seven Sisters of Sleep" between the purely ideal vision of "Alton Locke," and De Quincey's genuine experience, shows how easily the part of an opium-eater can be assumed by one whose sole indulgence is tobacco.

It cannot, then, be affirmed that opium made De Quincey an author, or invested him with the distinctive attributes of his genius. In all essential respects save one he would have been the same though he had never sought Elysium through the gate of dreams. In one sense, however, opium probably did make, if not exactly an author of him, yet an author who publishes. And this result, so vital for his fame, was attained in two ways apparently most unlikely, by diminishing his power of continuous application, and by reducing him to embarrassment and distress. With unimpaired and unclouded faculties he would probably have devoted himself to metaphysical or economical investigations, which his discursiveness and morbid scrupulousness would hardly have allowed him to complete. If he had actually brought anything to the point of publication he would still have left nothing imaginatively striking, nothing artistically perfect, nothing indicative of the extraordinary versatility of his

powers. Opium, incapacitating him for continuous mental toil, left his imagination and power of language unaffected; and for the rest delivered him over to adversity, to be taught that success depended upon pleasing the booksellers. To please the booksellers a man must finish, and hence De Quincey was driven to the execution of cabinet pieces, fanciful, historical, and critical; whose limits set bounds to research, and repressed his tendency to digression. One need only measure the length to which the "Confessions" ran when the literary market demanded expansion instead of condensation, to appreciate the advantage which De Quincey derived from this salutary discipline. In this sense, but in no other, opium may be said to have made a great author of him. As it is, his besetting sin is *palaver*—not however imbecile garrulity, but rather the pardonable tendency to expatiation of the princess whose lips dropped diamonds.

In the elaboration of his style, then, De Quincey was not the instrument of his favourite narcotic, but the child of his own age. While progressing in almost every other respect, his period witnessed a reaction in literary style due to many causes, but chiefly to the incapacity of eighteenth-century language for expressing

nineteenth-century thought. The Lockes and Swifts and Humes had rendered infinite service to the English tongue by divesting it of its cumbrousness, and rendering it an apt instrument for lucid reasoning. But the style which had served the purpose of an age content with logic no longer answered the purpose of an age of imagination. Hence the reaction towards the older and neglected masters of our tongue, a reaction which in Latin has imported conscious decay, in Romaic the revival of patriotic sentiment, in French literary affectation, but which in England was a symptom of robustness, and of a wealth of thought and feeling which the accepted models were unable to satisfy. It was from the contagion of this reaction, and not from the exhilaration of opium, that De Quincey learned the secret of his intricate combinations of melodious diction. What Spenser was to Keats, Milton and Browne and Jeremy Taylor were to him. Rightly understood, his literary career lends no countenance to the pernicious belief that inspiration lurks in grape or poppy. As a man, De Quincey often seemed to live in a dream: as a writer he only manifested the effects of the drug in the frequent paralysis of exertion which has rendered his undertakings so brief and desultory.

The soundness of De Quincey's literary instinct is illustrated by the first of the two interesting additions which we have been able to contribute to the present edition of the *Opium-Eater*. De Musset's attempt to round off the Oxford Street episode shows how hopeless is the attempt to patch and mend him. The Englishman proves that he knows where to stop ; the Frenchman, endeavouring to fill in the details which his fore-runner had judiciously left to the imagination, has but unveiled Agamemnon. The history of this remarkable but abortive introduction of De Quincey to France will be best given in the body of the work. We pass to another and still more interesting acquisition, Woodhouse's notes of De Quincey's conversation.

Richard Woodhouse, barrister of the Temple, himself wrote nothing for publication, but mingled with the brilliant literary circle which, about the year 1820, gathered around Messrs. Taylor and Hessey, publishers of the "*London Magazine*." To Keats in particular he was devotedly attached: and, bating some unjust though not unaccountable prejudice against Leigh Hunt, he may be reckoned the most judicious as well as the kindest of his friends. His affection for the unfortunate poet and compassion for his blighted life were expressed with a grave and

touching manliness : and to him were the heart-rending communications of Severn from Italy most commonly addressed. The proofs of these facts have unhappily perished in the conflagration which in 1883 destroyed the premises of the publishers of this series. One precious volume escaped, the note book which establishes that from September to December, 1821, Woodhouse enjoyed De Quincey's intimacy and recorded his conversation. It is highly to his credit that he should have so quickly discerned the splendour of this new light, which to the world at large had shone only in a single magazine article. His was no indiscriminating hero worship, but the same intelligent recognition of genius which he had already manifested in his loyal devotion to Keats. Nor can his fidelity as a reporter have been inferior to his perception as a critic. The reader of his notes will have no difficulty in distinguishing all the characteristics of De Quincey's style as a writer, and no less the peculiarities of his conversation as indicated by Carlyle, Hill Burton, Mrs. Gordon and others who have not, like Woodhouse, afforded us the materials for our own judgment. We seem conscious of the silvery accents, the courteous deference, the exquisitely refined phraseology, the subdued yet almost exaggerated earnestness, the

circumstantiality and subtlety, the copious flow of polished speech never lapsing into twaddle or swelling into harangue, which, if they could not wield a democracy, could hold a half astonished, half amused aristocracy of intellect by a spell like the Ancient Mariner's. The reader's imagination must indeed be enlisted to fill up some portions of this picture impaired by the absence of the speaker and the inevitable brevity of the reporter. But none can question that the actual discoursing De Quincey is brought nearer to us than ever before, and that his discourse is the counterpart of his writings.

It does not appear whether Woodhouse entertained any intention of some day giving his notes of De Quincey's conversation to the world. Although he recorded nothing uninteresting, his record is not all equally worthy of preservation. De Quincey, like other men, talked of things public and things personal ; and it could not be expected that his references to the latter should always be measured with the nicest discretion. His accents, moreover, fell upon ears where they must inevitably reverberate far beyond the intention of the speaker. Smarting under the coarse and insolent abuse levelled at his literary associates by the Tory press, Woodhouse was just in the mood to draw De Quincey into talk

on the characters and failings of the offenders. The fluent and impressionable De Quincey was easily led to dilate upon anything in which his interlocutor took an earnest interest : and he would probably have been not a little astonished if he could have been shown afterwards how much he had said. It is unnecessary to pursue the subject further, as the question what portions of De Quincey's utterances should be omitted or retained has been decided by the only persons whose right to a veto upon the Opium-Eater's written or spoken word is unchallengeable. The present writer has had the honour of submitting the MS., prepared by himself for the press, to De Quincey's two surviving daughters : and he takes pride in recording that, while his judgment with respect to the passages he proposed to omit was confirmed by theirs in every instance, no wish was expressed for the withdrawal of anything which he had deemed it fitting to retain. The approval of the speaker's representatives has thus removed any delicacy that might have been felt in publishing what was not designed for publication : and as the portion now printed contains nothing to lower, so the reader may rest assured that the comparatively insignificant portion omitted contained nothing to exalt, the character of any man dear to English letters.

Next to the daughters of De Quincey, the Editor's acknowledgments are due to Messrs. A. and C. Black, for their liberality in allowing the free use of the additions to the *Opium-Eater*, which are their property by copyright, in his notes upon the original text. He is also much indebted to the biographies of De Quincey by Mr. H. A. Page and Professor Masson ; and to the former gentleman for special aid, kindly and spontaneously tendered.

The text has been faithfully reproduced from the edition of 1821, except for a few slight changes in punctuation ; the filling up of initials where practicable ; the removal of notes to the end of the volume ; and the occasional omission of annotations evidently unimportant, or subsequently cancelled by De Quincey himself.

R. GARNETT,

Jan. 19, 1885.

*CONFESSIONS OF AN ENGLISH
OPIUM-EATER.*

NOTICE TO THE READER.

THE incidents recorded in the Preliminary Confessions lie within a period of which the earlier extreme is now rather more, and the latter extreme less, than nineteen years ago : consequently, in a popular way of computing dates, many of the incidents might be indifferently referred to a distance of eighteen or of nineteen years ; and, as the notes and memoranda for this narrative were drawn up originally about last Christmas, it seemed most natural in all cases to prefer the former date. In the hurry of composing the narrative, though some months had then elapsed, this date was every where retained : and, in many cases, perhaps, it leads to no error, or to none of importance. But in one instance, viz. where the author speaks of his own birth-day, this adoption of one uniform

2 *NOTICE TO THE READER.*

date has led to a positive inaccuracy of an entire year : for, during the very time of composition, the *nineteenth* year from the earlier term of the whole period revolved to its close. It is, therefore, judged proper to mention, that the period of that narrative lies between the early part of July, 1802, and the beginning or middle of March, 1803.

Oct. 1, 1821.

*CONFESSIONS OF AN ENGLISH
OPIUM-EATER.*

TO THE READER.

I HERE present you, courteous reader, with the record of a remarkable period in my life : according to my application of it, I trust that it will prove, not merely an interesting record, but, in a considerable degree, useful and instructive. In *that* hope it is, that I have drawn it up : and *that* must be my apology for breaking through that delicate and honourable reserve, which, for the most part, restrains us from the public exposure of our own errors and infirmities. Nothing, indeed, is more revolting to English feelings, than the spectacle of a human being obtruding on our notice his moral ulcers or scars, and tearing away that 'decent drapery,' which time, or indulgence to human frailty, may have drawn over them : accordingly, the greater part of *our* confessions (that is,

spontaneous and extra-judicial confessions) proceed from demireps, adventurers, or swindlers : and for any such acts of gratuitous self-humiliation from those who can be supposed in sympathy with the decent and self-respecting part of society, we must look to French literature, or to that part of the German which is tainted with the spurious and defective sensibility of the French. All this I feel so forcibly, and so nervously am I alive to reproach of this tendency, that I have for many months hesitated about the propriety of allowing this, or any part of my narrative, to come before the public eye, until after my death, when, for many reasons, the whole will be published : and it is not without an anxious review of the reasons for and against this step that I have, at last, concluded on taking it.

Guilt and misery shrink, by a natural instinct, from public notice : they court privacy and solitude : and, even in their choice of a grave, will sometimes sequester themselves from the general population of the churchyard, as if declining to claim fellowship with the great family of man, and wishing (in the affecting language of Mr. Wordsworth)

— humbly to express
A penitential loneliness.

It is well, upon the whole, and for the interest of us all, that it should be so : nor would I willingly, in my own person, manifest a disregard of such salutary feelings ; nor in act or word do any thing to weaken them. But, on the one hand, as my self-accusation does not amount to a confession of guilt, so, on the other, it is possible that, if it *did*, the benefit resulting to others from the record of an experience purchased at so heavy a price, might compensate, by a vast overbalance, for any violence done to the feelings I have noticed, and justify a breach of the general rule. Infirmary and misery do not, of necessity, imply guilt. They approach, or recede from, the shades of that dark alliance, in proportion to the probable motives and prospects of the offender, and the palliations, known or secret, of the offence : in proportion as the temptations to it were potent from the first, and the resistance to it, in act or in effort, was earnest to the last. For my own part, without breach of truth or modesty, I may affirm, that my life has been, on the whole, the life of a philosopher : from my birth I was made an intellectual creature : and intellectual in the highest sense my pursuits and pleasures have been, even from my school-boy days. If opium-eating be a sensual pleasure, and if I am bound

to confess that I have indulged in it to an excess not yet *recorded* of any other man, it is no less true that I have struggled against this fascinating enthrallment with a religious zeal, and have, at length, accomplished what I never yet heard attributed to any other man—have untwisted, almost to its final links, the accursed chain which fettered me. Such a self-conquest may reasonably be set off in counterbalance to any kind or degree of self-indulgence. Not to insist, that in my case, the self-conquest was unquestionable, the self-indulgence open to doubts of casuistry, according as that name shall be extended to acts aiming at the bare relief of pain, or shall be restricted to such as aim at the excitement of positive pleasure.

Guilt, therefore, I do not acknowledge: and, if I did, it is possible that I might still resolve on the present act of confession, in consideration of the service which I may thereby render to the whole class of opium-eaters. But who are they? Reader, I am sorry to say, a very numerous class indeed. Of this I became convinced some years ago, by computing, at that time, the number of those in one small class of English society—the class of men distinguished for talents, or of eminent station,—who were known to me, directly or indirectly, as opium-eaters;

such for instance, as the eloquent and benevolent [William Wilberforce]; the late Dean of Carlisle [Dr. Isaac Milner]; Lord [Erskine]; Mr.—, the philosopher; a late under-secretary of state [Mr. Addington, brother to the late Lord Sidmouth], who described to me the sensation which first drove him to the use of opium, in the very same words as the Dean of [Carlisle], viz. “that he felt as though rats were gnawing and abrading the coats of his stomach”; Mr. [Coleridge]; and many others, hardly less known, whom it would be tedious to mention. Now, if one class, comparatively so limited, could furnish so many scores of cases (and *that* within the knowledge of one single inquirer), it was a natural inference that the entire population of England would furnish a proportionable number. The soundness of this inference, however, I doubted, until some facts became known to me, which satisfied me that it was not incorrect. I will mention two: 1. Three respectable London druggists, in widely remote quarters of London, from whom I happened lately to be purchasing small quantities of opium, assured me, that the number of *amateur* opium-eaters (as I may term them) was, at this time, immense; and that the difficulty of distinguishing these persons, to whom habit had rendered opium necessary,

from such as were purchasing it with a view to suicide, occasioned them daily trouble and disputes. This evidence respected London only. But, 2, which will possibly surprise the reader more, some years ago, on passing through Manchester, I was informed by several cotton-manufacturers that their work-people were rapidly getting into the practice of opium-eating ; so much so, that on a Saturday afternoon the counters of the druggists were strewn with pills of one, two, or three grains, in preparation for the known demand of the evening. The immediate occasion of this practice was the lowness of wages, which, at that time, would not allow them to indulge in ale or spirits : and, wages rising, it may be thought that this practice would cease : but, as I do not readily believe that any man, having once tasted the divine luxuries of opium, will afterwards descend to the gross and mortal enjoyments of alcohol, I take it for granted,

That those eat now, who never ate before ;
And those who always ate, now eat the more.

Indeed the fascinating powers of opium are admitted, even by medical writers, who are its greatest enemies : thus, for instance, Awsiter, apothecary to Greenwich Hospital, in his

"Essay on the Effects of Opium" (published in the year 1763), when attempting to explain, why Mead had not been sufficiently explicit on the properties, counteragents, etc., of this drug, expresses himself in the following mysterious terms (*φωναρρα ουπερτοι*): "perhaps he thought the subject of too delicate a nature to be made common; and as many people might then indiscriminately use it, it would take from that necessary fear and caution, which should prevent their experiencing the extensive power of this drug: *for there are many properties in it, if universally known, that would habituate the use, and make it more in request with us than the Turks themselves*: the result of which knowledge," he adds, "must prove a general misfortune." In the necessity of this conclusion I do not altogether concur: but upon that point I shall have occasion to speak at the close of my confessions, where I shall present the reader with the *moral* of my narrative.

PRELIMINARY CONFESSIONS.

THESE preliminary confessions, or introductory narrative of the youthful adventures which laid the foundation of the writer's habit of opium-eating in after-life, it has been judged proper to premise, for three several reasons :

1. As forestalling that question, and giving it a satisfactory answer, which else would painfully obtrude itself in the course of the *Opium-Confessions*—"How came any reasonable being to subject himself to such a yoke of misery, voluntarily to incur a captivity so servile, and knowingly to fetter himself with such a seven-fold chain?"—a question which, if not somewhere plausibly resolved, could hardly fail, by the indignation which it would be apt to raise as against an act of wanton folly, to interfere with that degree of sympathy which is necessary in any case to an author's purposes.

2. As furnishing a key to some parts of that tremendous scenery which afterwards peopled the dreams of the opium-eater.

3. As creating some previous interest of a personal sort in the confessing subject, apart from the matter of the confessions, which can not fail to render the confessions themselves more interesting. If a man, "whose talk is of oxen," should become an opium-eater, the probability is, that (if he is not too dull to dream at all)—he will dream about oxen : whereas, in the case before him, the reader will find that the opium-eater boasteth himself to be a philosopher ; and accordingly, that the phantasmagoria of *his* dreams (waking or sleeping, day-dreams or night-dreams) is suitable to one who in that character,

Humani nihil a se alienum putat.

For amongst the conditions which he deems indispensable to the sustaining of any claim to the title of philosopher, is not merely the possession of a superb intellect in its *analytic* functions—in which part of the pretension, however, England can for some generations show but few claimants ; at least, he is not aware of any known candidate for this honour, who can be styled emphatically *a subtle thinker*, with the exception of *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, and in a narrower department of thought, with the recent illustrious exception of *David Ricardo*—but

also such a constitution of the *moral* faculties as shall give him an inner eye and power of intuition for the vision and the mysteries of our human nature : *that* constitution of faculties, in short, which, amongst all the generations of men that from the beginning of time have deployed into life, as it were, upon this planet, our English poets have possessed in the highest degree, and Scottish professors in the lowest.

I have often been asked how I came to be a regular opium-eater ; and have suffered, very unjustly, in the opinion of my acquaintance, from being reputed to have brought upon myself all the sufferings which I shall have to record, by a long course of indulgence in this practice purely for the sake of creating an artificial state of pleasurable excitement. This, however, is a misrepresentation of my case. True it is, that for nearly ten years I did occasionally take opium for the sake of the exquisite pleasure it gave me : but, so long as I took it with this view, I was effectually protected from all material bad consequences by the necessity of interposing long intervals between the several acts of indulgence, in order to renew the pleasurable sensations. It was not for the purpose of creating pleasure, but of mitigating pain in

the severest degree, that I first began to use opium as an article of daily diet. In the twenty-eighth year of my age, a most painful affection of the stomach, which I had first experienced about ten years before, attacked me in great strength. This affection had originally been caused by extremities of hunger, suffered in my boyish days. During the season of hope and redundant happiness which succeeded (that is, from eighteen to twenty-four) it had slumbered : for the three following years it had revived at intervals : and now, under unfavourable circumstances, from depression of spirits, it attacked me with a violence that yielded to no remedies but opium. As the youthful sufferings which first produced this derangement of the stomach, were interesting in themselves, and in the circumstances that attended them, I shall here briefly retrace them.

My father died when I was about seven years old, and left me to the care of four guardians. I was sent to various schools, great and small ; and was very early distinguished for my classical attainments, especially for my knowledge of Greek. At thirteen, I wrote Greek with ease ; and at fifteen my command of that language was so great that I not only composed Greek verses in lyric metres, but could converse in

Greek fluently, and without embarrassment—an accomplishment which I have not since met with in any scholar of my times, and which, in my case, was owing to the practice of daily reading off the newspapers into the best Greek I could furnish *extempore*: for the necessity of ransacking my memory and invention for all sorts and combinations of periphrastic expressions, as equivalents for modern ideas, images, relations of things, etc., gave me a compass of diction which would never have been called out by a dull translation of moral essays, etc. "That boy," said one of my masters, pointing the attention of a stranger to me, "that boy could harangue an Athenian mob better than you or I could address an English one." He who honoured me with this eulogy, was a scholar, "and a ripe and good one:" and, of all my tutors, was the only one whom I loved or revered. Unfortunately for me (and, as I afterwards learned, to this worthy man's great indignation), I was transferred to the care, first of a blockhead, who was in a perpetual panic lest I should expose his ignorance; and finally, to that of a respectable scholar, at the head of a great school on an ancient foundation. This man had been appointed to his situation by Brasenose College, Oxford; and was a sound,

well-built scholar, but, like most men whom I have known from that college, coarse, clumsy, and inelegant. A miserable contrast he presented, in my eyes, to the Etonian brilliancy of my favourite master : and, besides, he could not disguise from my hourly notice the poverty and meagreness of his understanding. It is a bad thing for a boy to be, and to know himself, far beyond his tutors, whether in knowledge or in power of mind. This was the case, so far as regarded knowledge at least, not with myself only : for the two boys, who jointly with myself composed the first form, were better Grecians than the head-master, though not more elegant scholars, nor at all more accustomed to sacrifice to the graces. When I first entered, I remember that we read Sophocles ; and it was a constant matter of triumph to us, the learned triumvirate of the first form, to see our ' Archididascalus,' as he loved to be called, conning our lesson before we went up, and laying a regular train, with lexicon and grammar, for blowing up and blasting, as it were, any difficulties he found in the choruses ; whilst *we* never condescended to open our books until the moment of going up, and were generally employed in writing epigrams upon his wig, or some such important matter. My two class-fellows were poor, and dependent

for their future prospects at the university, on the recommendation of the head-master : but I, who had a small patrimonial property, the income of which was sufficient to support me at college, wished to be sent thither immediately. I made earnest representations on the subject to my guardians, but all to no purpose. One, who was more reasonable, and had more knowledge of the world than the rest, lived at a distance : two of the other three resigned all their authority into the hands of the fourth ; and this fourth, with whom I had to negotiate, was a worthy man in his way, but haughty, obstinate, and intolerant of all opposition to his will. After a certain number of letters and personal interviews, I found that I had nothing to hope for, not even a compromise of the matter, from my guardian : unconditional submission was what he demanded : and I prepared myself, therefore, for other measures. Summer was now coming on with hasty steps, and my seventeenth birthday was fast approaching ; after which day I had sworn within myself that I would no longer be numbered amongst school-boys. Money being what I chiefly wanted, I wrote to a woman of high rank, who, though young herself, had known me from a child, and had latterly treated me with great distinction, requesting that she

would 'lend' me five guineas. For upwards of a week no answer came ; and I was beginning to despond, when, at length, a servant put into my hands a double letter, with a coronet on the seal. The letter was kind and obliging : the fair writer was on the sea-coast, and in that way the delay had arisen : she enclosed double of what I had asked, and good-naturedly hinted that if I should *never* repay her it would not absolutely ruin her. Now then, I was prepared for my scheme : ten guineas, added to about two which I had remaining from my pocket money, seemed to me sufficient for an indefinite length of time : and at that happy age, if no *definite* boundary can be assigned to one's power, the spirit of hope and pleasure makes it virtually infinite.

It is a just remark of Dr. Johnson's, and, what cannot often be said of his remarks, it is a very feeling one, that we never do anything consciously for the last time—of things, that is, which we have long been in the habit of doing—without sadness of heart. This truth I felt deeply, when I came to leave [Manchester], a place which I did not love, and where I had not been happy. On the evening before I left [Manchester] for ever, I grieved when the ancient and lofty school-room resounded with the evening service,

performed for the last time in my hearing ; and at night, when the muster-roll of names was called over, and mine, as usual, was called first, I stepped forward, and, passing the head master, who was standing by, I bowed to him, and looked earnestly in his face, thinking to myself, "He is old and infirm, and in this world I shall not see him again." I was right : I never *did* see him again, nor ever shall. He looked at me complacently, smiled good-naturedly, returned my salutation, or rather my valediction, and we parted, though he knew it not, for ever. I could not reverence him intellectually : but he had been uniformly kind to me, and had allowed me many indulgences : and I grieved at the thought of the mortification I should inflict upon him.

The morning came which was to launch me into the world, and from which my whole succeeding life has, in many important points, taken its colouring. I lodged in the head master's house, and had been allowed, from my first entrance, the indulgence of a private room, which I used both as a sleeping-room and as a study. At half after three I rose, and gazed with deep emotion at the ancient towers of [the Collegiate Church], "drest in earliest light," and beginning to crimson with the radiant lustre of a

cloudless July morning. I was firm and immovable in my purpose : but yet agitated by anticipation of uncertain danger and troubles ; and, if I could have foreseen the hurricane and perfect hail-storm of affliction which soon fell upon me, well might I have been agitated. To this agitation the deep peace of the morning presented an affecting contrast, and in some degree a medicine. The silence was more profound than that of midnight : and to me the silence of a summer morning is more touching than all other silence, because, the light being broad and strong, as that of noon-day at other seasons of the year, it seems to differ from perfect day chiefly because man is not yet abroad ; and thus the peace of nature, and of the innocent creatures of God, seems to be secure and deep, only so long as the presence of man, and his restless and unquiet spirit, are not there to trouble its sanctity. I dressed myself, took my hat and gloves, and lingered a little in the room. For the last year and a half this room had been my "pensive citadel :" here I had read and studied through all the hours of night : and, though true it was that for the latter part of this time I, who was framed for love and gentle affections, had lost my gaiety and happiness, during the strife and fever of contention with my guardian ; yet, on

the other hand, as a boy so passionately fond of books, and dedicated to intellectual pursuits, I could not fail to have enjoyed many happy hours in the midst of general dejection. I wept as I looked round on the chair, hearth, writing-table, and other familiar objects, knowing too certainly that I looked upon them for the last time. Whilst I write this, it is nineteen years ago : and yet, at this moment, I see distinctly as if it were yesterday the lineaments and expression of the object on which I fixed my parting gaze : it was a picture of the lovely —, which hung over the mantle-piece ; the eyes and mouth of which were so beautiful, and the whole countenance so radiant with benignity and divine tranquillity, that I had a thousand times laid down my pen or my book, to gather consolation from it, as a devotee from his patron saint. Whilst I was yet gazing upon it, the deep tones of [Manchester] clock proclaimed that it was four o'clock. I went up to the picture, kissed it, and then gently walked out, and closed the door for ever !

* * * * *

So blended and intertwined in this life are occasions of laughter and of tears, that I cannot yet recal, without smiling, an incident which occurred at that time, and which had nearly put a stop to the immediate execution of my plan.

I had a trunk of immense weight ; for, besides my clothes, it contained nearly all my library. The difficulty was to get this removed to a carrier's : my room was at an aerial elevation in the house, and (what was worse) the stair-case, which communicated with this angle of the building, was accessible only by a gallery, which passed the head master's chamber-door. I was a favourite with all the servants ; and, knowing that any of them would screen me, and act confidentially, I communicated my embarrassment to a groom of the head master's. The groom swore he would do any thing I wished ; and, when the time arrived, went up stairs to bring the trunk down. This I feared was beyond the strength of any one man : however, the groom was a man—

Of Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear
The weight of mightiest monarchies ;

and had a back as spacious as Salisbury plain. Accordingly he persisted in bringing down the trunk alone, whilst I stood waiting at the foot of the last flight, in anxiety for the event. For some time I heard him descending with slow and firm steps : but, unfortunately, from his trepidation as he drew near the dangerous quarter, within a few steps of the gallery, his

foot slipped ; and the mighty burden, falling from his shoulders, gained such increase of impetus at each step of the descent, that, on reaching the bottom, it tumbled, or rather leaped, right across, with the noise of twenty devils, against the very bed-room door of the Archidiascalus. My first thought was, that all was lost ; and that my only chance for executing a retreat was to sacrifice my baggage. However, on reflection, I determined to abide the issue. The groom was in the utmost alarm, both on his own account and on mine : but, in spite of this, so irresistibly had the sense of the ludicrous, in this unhappy *contretemps*, taken possession of his fancy, that he sang out a long, loud, and canorous peal of laughter, that might have wakened the Seven Sleepers. At the sound of this resonant merriment, within the very ears of insulted authority, I could not myself forbear joining in it : subdued to this, not so much by the unhappy *étourderie* of the trunk, as by the effect it had upon the groom. We both expected, as a matter of course, that Dr. [Lawson] would sally out of his room : for, in general, if but a mouse stirred, he sprang out like a mastiff from his kennel. Strange to say, however, on this occasion, when the noise of laughter had ceased, no sound, or rustling even, was to be heard in

the bed-room. Dr. [Lawson] had a painful complaint, which, sometimes keeping him awake, made his sleep, perhaps, when it *did* come, the deeper. Gathering courage from the silence, the groom hoisted his burden again, and accomplished the remainder of his descent without accident. I waited until I saw the trunk placed on a wheel-barrow, and on its road to the carrier's : then, "with Providence my guide," I set off on foot,—carrying a small parcel, with some articles of dress, under my arm ; a favourite English poet in one pocket ; and a small 12mo. volume, containing about nine plays of Euripides, in the other.

It had been my intention originally to proceed to Westmorland, both from the love I bore to that country, and on other personal accounts. Accident, however, gave a different direction to my wanderings, and I bent my steps towards North Wales.

After wandering about for some time in Denbighshire, Merionethshire, and Caernarvonshire, I took lodgings in a small neat house in Bangor. Here I might have staid with great comfort for many weeks ; for provisions were cheap at Bangor, from the scarcity of other markets for the surplus produce of a wide agricultural district. An accident, however, in which, perhaps,

no offence was designed, drove me out to wander again. I know not whether my reader may have remarked, but I have often remarked, that the proudest class of people in England, or at any rate, the class whose pride is most apparent, are the families of bishops. Noblemen and their children carry about with them in their very titles, a sufficient notification of their rank. Nay, their very names, and this applies also to the children of many untitled houses, are often to the English ear adequate exponents of high birth or descent. Sackville, Manners, Fitzroy, Paulet, Cavendish, and scores of others, tell their own tale. Such persons, therefore, find every where a due sense of their claims already established, except among those who are ignorant of the world by virtue of their own obscurity: "Not to know *them*, argues one's self unknown." Their manners take a suitable tone and colouring; and, for once that they find it necessary to impress a sense of their consequence upon others, they meet with a thousand occasions for moderating and tempering this sense by acts of courteous condescension. With the families of bishops it is otherwise: with them it is all uphill work to make known their pretensions: for the proportion of the episcopal bench taken from noble families is not at any time very

large ; and the succession to these dignities is so rapid that the public ear seldom has time to become familiar with them, unless where they are connected with some literary reputation. Hence it is, that the children of bishops carry about with them an austere and repulsive air, indicative of claims not generally acknowledged, a sort of *noli me tangere* manner, nervously apprehensive of too familiar approach, and shrinking with the sensitiveness of a gouty man, from all contact with the *οἱ πολλοί*. Doubtless, a powerful understanding, or unusual goodness of nature, will preserve a man from such weakness : but, in general, the truth of my representation will be acknowledged : pride, if not of deeper root in such families, appears, at least, more upon the surface of their manners. This spirit of manners naturally communicates itself to their domestics and other dependents. Now, my landlady had been a lady's maid, or a nurse, in the family of the Bishop of Bangor ; and had but lately married away and "settled" (as such people express it) for life. In a little town like Bangor merely to have lived in the bishop's family conferred some distinction : and my good landlady had rather more than her share of the pride I have noticed on that score. What "my lord" said, and what "my lord" did, how

useful he was in parliament, and how indispensable at Oxford, formed the daily burden of her talk. All this I bore very well : for I was too good-natured to laugh in any body's face, and I could make an ample allowance for the garrulity of an old servant. Of necessity, however, I must have appeared in her eyes very inadequately impressed with the bishop's importance : and, perhaps, to punish me for my indifference, or possibly by accident, she one day repeated to me a conversation in which I was indirectly a party concerned. She had been to the palace to pay her respects to the family ; and, dinner being over, was summoned into the dining-room. In giving an account of her household economy, she happened to mention that she had let her apartments. Thereupon the good bishop (it seemed) had taken occasion to caution her as to her selection of inmates : "for," said he, "you must recollect, Betty, that this place is in the high road to the Head ; so that multitudes of Irish swindlers, running away from their debts into England—and of English swindlers running away from their debts to the Isle of Man, are likely to take this place in their route." This advice was certainly not without reasonable grounds : but rather fitted to be stored up for Mrs. Betty's private meditations, than specially

reported to me. What followed, however, was somewhat worse :—"Oh, my lord," answered my landlady (according to her own representation of the matter), "I really don't think this young gentleman is a swindler ; because ——" :—"You don't *think* me a swindler ?" said I, interrupting her, in a tumult of indignation : "for the future I shall spare you the trouble of thinking about it." And without delay I prepared for my departure. Some concessions the good woman seemed disposed to make : but a harsh and contemptuous expression, which I fear that I applied to the learned dignitary himself, roused *her* indignation in turn : and reconciliation then became impossible. I was, indeed, greatly irritated at the bishop's having suggested any grounds of suspicion, however remotely, against a person whom he had never seen : and I thought of letting him know my mind in Greek : which, at the same time that it would furnish some presumption that I was no swindler, would also, I hoped, compel the bishop to reply in the same language ; in which case, I doubted not to make it appear, that if I was not so rich as his lordship, I was a better Grecian. Calmer thoughts, however, drove this boyish design out of my mind : for I considered that the bishop was in the right to counsel an old servant ; that

he could not have designed that his advice should be reported to me ; and that the same coarseness of mind which had led Mrs. Betty to repeat the advice at all might have coloured it in a way more agreeable to her own style of thinking than to the actual expressions of the worthy bishop.

I left the lodgings the same hour ; and this turned out a very unfortunate occurrence for me : because, living henceforward at inns, I was drained of my money very rapidly. In a fortnight I was reduced to short allowance ; that is, I could allow myself only one meal a day. From the keen appetite produced by constant exercise and mountain air acting on a youthful stomach, I soon began to suffer greatly on this slender regimen ; for the single meal which I could venture to order was coffee or tea. Even this, however, was at length withdrawn : and afterwards, so long as I remained in Wales, I subsisted either on blackberries, hips, haws, etc., or on the casual hospitalities which I now and then received, in return for such little services as I had an opportunity of rendering. Sometimes I wrote letters of business for cottagers, who happened to have relatives in Liverpool, or in London : more often I wrote love-letters to their sweethearts for young women who had lived as

servants in Shrewsbury, or other towns on the English border. On all such occasions I gave great satisfaction to my humble friends, and was generally treated with hospitality : and once, in particular, near the village of Llan-y-styndw (or some such name), in a sequestered part of Merionethshire, I was entertained for upwards of three days by a family of young people, with an affectionate and fraternal kindness that left an impression upon my heart not yet impaired. The family consisted, at that time, of four sisters and three brothers, all grown up, and all remarkable for elegance and delicacy of manners. So much beauty, and so much native good-breeding and refinement, I do not remember to have seen before or since in any cottage, except once or twice in Westmorland and Devonshire. They spoke English : an accomplishment not often met with in so many members of one family, especially in villages remote from the high road. Here I wrote, on my first introduction, a letter about prize-money, for one of the brothers, who had served on board an English man of war ; and more privately, two love-letters for two of the sisters. They were both interesting looking girls, and one of uncommon loveliness. In the midst of their confusion and blushes, whilst dictating, or rather giving me general instructions,

it did not require any great penetration to discover that what they wished was, that their letters should be as kind as was consistent with proper maidenly pride. I contrived so to temper my expressions as to reconcile the gratification of both feelings : and they were as much pleased with the way in which I had expressed their thoughts, as, in their simplicity, they were astonished at my having so readily discovered them. The reception one meets with from the women of a family generally determines the tenour of one's whole entertainment. In this case I had discharged my confidential duties as secretary so much to the general satisfaction, perhaps also amusing them with my conversation, that I was pressed to stay with a cordiality which I had little inclination to resist. I slept with the brothers, the only unoccupied bed standing in the apartment of the young women : but in all other points, they treated me with a respect not usually paid to purses as light as mine ; as if my scholarship were sufficient evidence, that I was of "gentle blood." Thus I lived with them for three days, and great part of a fourth : and, from the undiminished kindness which they continued to show me, I believe I might have staid with them up to this time, if their power had corresponded with their wishes. On the last

morning, however, I perceived upon their countenances, as they sat at breakfast, the expression of some unpleasant communication which was at hand ; and soon after one of the brothers explained to me, that their parents had gone, the day before my arrival, to an annual meeting of Methodists, held at Caernarvon, and were that day expected to return ; "and if they should not be so civil as they ought to be," he begged, on the part of all the young people, that I would not take it amiss. The parents returned, with churlish faces, and "*Dym Sassenach*" (*no English*), in answer to all my addresses. I saw how matters stood ; and so, taking an affectionate leave of my kind and interesting young hosts, I went my way. For, though they spoke warmly to their parents in my behalf, and often excused the manner of the old people, by saying, that it was "only their way," yet I easily understood that my talent for writing love-letters would do as little to recommend me with two grave sexagenarian Welsh Methodists, as my Greek Sapphics or Alcaics : and what had been hospitality, when offered to me with the gracious courtesy of my young friends, would become charity, when connected with the harsh demeanour of these old people. Certainly, Mr. Shelley is right in his notions about old age : unless powerfully

counteracted by all sorts of opposite agencies, it is a miserable corrupter and blighter to the genial charities of the human heart.

Soon after this, I contrived, by means which I must omit for want of room, to transfer myself to London. And now began the latter and fiercer stage of my long sufferings ; without using a disproportionate expression, I might say, of my agony. For I now suffered, for upwards of sixteen weeks, the physical anguish of hunger in various degrees of intensity ; but as bitter, perhaps, as ever any human being can have suffered who has survived it. I would not needlessly harass my reader's feelings by a detail of all that I endured : for extremities such as these, under any circumstances of heaviest misconduct or guilt, cannot be contemplated even in description without a rueful pity that is painful to the natural goodness of the human heart. Let it suffice, at least on this occasion, to say, that a few fragments of bread from the breakfast-table of one individual, who supposed me to be ill, but did not know of my being in utter want, and these at uncertain intervals, constituted my whole support. During the former part of my sufferings, that is, generally in Wales, and always for the first two months in London, I was houseless, and very seldom slept under a roof. To

this constant exposure to the open air I ascribe it mainly that I did not sink under my torments. Latterly, however, when colder and more inclement weather came on, and when, from the length of my sufferings, I had begun to sink into a more languishing condition, it was, no doubt, fortunate for me that the same person to whose breakfast-table I had access allowed me to sleep in a large unoccupied house, of which he was tenant. Unoccupied, I call it, for there was no household or establishment in it ; nor any furniture indeed, except a table and a few chairs. But I found, on taking possession of my new quarters, that the house already contained one single inmate, a poor friendless child, apparently ten years old ; but she seemed hunger-bitten ; and sufferings of that sort often make children look older than they are. From this forlorn child I learned that she had slept and lived there alone for some time before I came : and great joy the poor creature expressed, when she found that I was, in future, to be her companion through the hours of darkness. The house was large ; and, from the want of furniture, the noise of the rats made a prodigious echoing on the spacious stair-case and hall ; and, amidst the real fleshly ills of cold, and, I fear, hunger, the forsaken child had found leisure to suffer still more, it

appeared, from the self-created one of ghosts. I promised her protection against all ghosts whatsoever : but, alas ! I could offer her no other assistance. We lay upon the floor, with a bundle of cursed law papers for a pillow : but with no other covering than a sort of large horseman's cloak : afterwards, however, we discovered, in a garret, an old sofa-cover, a small piece of rug, and some fragments of other articles, which added a little to our warmth. The poor child crept close to me for warmth, and for security against her ghostly enemies. When I was not more than usually ill, I took her into my arms, so that, in general, she was tolerably warm, and often slept when I could not : for, during the last two months of my sufferings, I slept much in the day-time, and was apt to fall into transient dozings at all hours. But my sleep distressed me more than my watching : for, besides the tumultuousness of my dreams, which were only not so awful as those which I shall have to describe hereafter as produced by opium, my sleep was never more than what is called *dog-sleep* ; so that I could hear myself moaning, and was often, as it seemed to me, wakened suddenly by my own voice ; and, about this time, a hideous sensation began to haunt me as soon as I fell into a slumber, which has since returned upon me

at different periods of my life, viz. a sort of twitching, I know not where, but apparently about the region of the stomach, which compelled me violently to throw out my feet for the sake of relieving it. This sensation coming on as soon as I began to sleep, and the effort to relieve it constantly awaking me, at length I slept only from exhaustion ; and from increasing weakness, as I said before, I was constantly falling asleep, and constantly awaking. Meantime, the master of the house sometimes came in upon us suddenly, and very early, sometimes not till ten o'clock, sometimes not at all. He was in constant fear of bailiffs : improving on the plan of Cromwell, every night he slept in a different quarter of London ; and I observed that he never failed to examine through a private window the appearance of those who knocked at the door, before he would allow it to be opened. He breakfasted alone : indeed, his tea equipage would hardly have admitted of his hazarding an invitation to a second person—any more than the quantity of esculent *matériel*, which, for the most part, was little more than a roll, or a few biscuits, which he had bought on his road from the place where he had slept. Or, if he *had* asked a party, as I once learnedly and facetiously observed to him

—the several members of it must have *stood* in the relation to each other (not *sat* in any relation whatever) of succession, as the metaphysicians have it, and not of co-existence ; in the relation of the parts of time, and not of the parts of space. During his breakfast, I generally contrived a reason for lounging in ; and, with an air of as much indifference as I could assume, took up such fragments as he had left—sometimes, indeed, there were none at all. In doing this, I committed no robbery except upon the man himself, who was thus obliged, I believe, now and then to send out at noon for an extra biscuit ; for, as to the poor child, *she* was never admitted into his study, if I may give that name to his chief depository of parchments, law writings, etc. ; that room was to her the Blue-beard room of the house, being regularly locked on his departure to dinner, about six o'clock, which usually was his final departure for the night. Whether this child were an illegitimate daughter of Mr. [Brunell], or only a servant, I could not ascertain ; she did not herself know ; but certainly she was treated altogether as a menial servant. No sooner did Mr. [Brunell] make his appearance, than she went below stairs, brushed his shoes, coat, etc. ; and, except when she was summoned to run an errand, she never

emerged from the dismal Tartarus of the kitchens, etc. to the upper air, until my welcome knock at night called up her little trembling footsteps to the front door. Of her life during the day-time, however, I knew little but what I gathered from her own account at night ; for, as soon as the hours of business commenced, I saw that my absence would be acceptable ; and, in general, therefore, I went off, and sat in the parks, or elsewhere, until night-fall.

But who, and what, meantime, was the master of the house himself? Reader, he was one of those anomalous practitioners in lower departments of the law, who—what shall I say?—who, on prudential reasons, or from necessity, deny themselves all indulgence in the luxury of too delicate a conscience: (a periphrasis which might be abridged considerably, but *that* I leave to the reader's taste :) in many walks of life, a conscience is a more expensive encumbrance, than a wife or a carriage ; and just as people talk of "laying down" their carriages, so I suppose my friend, Mr. [Brunell], had "laid down" his conscience for a time ; meaning, doubtless, to resume it as soon as he could afford it. The inner economy of such a man's daily life would present a most strange picture, if I could allow myself to amuse the reader at his expense.

Even with my limited opportunities for observing what went on, I saw many scenes of London intrigues, and complex chicanery, "cycle and epicycle, orb in orb," at which I sometimes smile to this day—and at which I smiled then, in spite of my misery. My situation, however, at that time, gave me little experience, in my own person, of any qualities in Mr. Brunell's character but such as did him honour ; and of his whole strange composition I must forget every thing but that towards me he was obliging, and to the extent of his power, generous.

That power was not, indeed, very extensive ; however, in common with the rats, I sat rent free ; and, as Dr. Johnson has recorded, that he never but once in his life had as much wall-fruit as he could eat, so let me be grateful, that on that single occasion I had as large a choice of apartments in a London mansion as I could possibly desire. Except the Blue-beard room, which the poor child believed to be haunted, all others, from the attics to the cellars, were at our service ; "the world was all before us ;" and we pitched our tent for the night in any spot we chose. This house I have already described as a large one ; it stands in a conspicuous situation, and in a well-known part of London.

Many of my readers will have passed it, I doubt not, within a few hours of reading this. For myself, I never fail to visit it when business draws me to London ; about ten o'clock, this very night, August 15, 1821, being my birthday,—I turned aside from my evening walk, down Oxford-street, purposely to take a glance at it : it is now occupied by a respectable family ; and, by the lights in the front drawing-room, I observed a domestic party, assembled perhaps at tea, and apparently cheerful and gay. Marvellous contrast in my eyes to the darkness—cold—silence—and desolation of that same house eighteen years ago, when its nightly occupants were one famishing scholar, and a neglected child.—Her, by the bye, in after years, I vainly endeavoured to trace. Apart from her situation, she was not what would be called an interesting child : she was neither pretty, nor quick in understanding, nor remarkably pleasing in manners. But, thank God ! even in those years I needed not the embellishments of novel-accessaries to conciliate my affections ; plain human nature, in its humblest and most homely apparel, was enough for me : and I loved the child because she was my partner in wretchedness. If she is now living, she is probably a mother, with children of her

own; but, as I have said, I could never trace her.

✓ This I regret, but another person there was at that time, whom I have since sought to trace with far deeper earnestness, and with far deeper sorrow at my failure. This person was a young woman, and one of that unhappy class who subsist upon the wages of prostitution. I feel no shame, nor have any reason to feel it, in avowing, that I was then on familiar and friendly terms with many women in that unfortunate condition. The reader needs neither smile at this avowal, nor frown. For, not to remind my classical readers of the old Latin proverb—*"Sine Cerere,"* etc., it may well be supposed that in the existing state of my purse my connexion with such women could not have been an impure one. But the truth is, that at no time of my life have I been a person to hold myself polluted by the touch or approach of any creature that wore a human shape: on the contrary, from my very earliest youth it has been my pride to converse familiarly, *more Socratico*, with all human beings, man, woman, and child, that chance might fling in my way: a practice which is friendly to the knowledge of human nature, to good feelings, and to that frankness of address which becomes a man who

would be thought a philosopher. For a philosopher should not see with the eyes of the poor liminary creature, calling himself a man of the world, and filled with narrow and self-regarding prejudices of birth and education, but should look upon himself as a Catholic creature, and as standing in an equal relation to high and low—to educated and uneducated, to the guilty and the innocent. Being myself at that time of necessity a peripatetic, or a walker of the streets, I naturally fell in more frequently with those female peripatetics who are technically called street-walkers. Many of these women had occasionally taken my part against watchmen who wished to drive me off the steps of houses where I was sitting. But one amongst them, the one on whose account I have at all introduced this subject—yet no! let me not class thee, oh noble-minded Ann ———, with that order of women; let me find, if it be possible, some gentler name to designate the condition of her to whose bounty and compassion, ministering to my necessities when all the world had forsaken me, I owe it that I am at this time alive.—For many weeks I had walked at nights with this poor friendless girl up and down Oxford-street, or had rested with her on steps and under the shelter of porticoes. She could not be so old

as myself : she told me, indeed, that she had not completed her sixteenth year. By such questions as my interest about her prompted, I had gradually drawn forth her simple history. Hers was a case of ordinary occurrence (as I have since had reason to think), and one in which, if London beneficence had better adapted its arrangements to meet it, the power of the law might oftener be interposed to protect, and to avenge. But the stream of London charity flows in a channel which, though deep and mighty, is yet noiseless and underground ; not obvious or readily accessible to poor houseless wanderers : and it cannot be denied that the outside air and frame-work of London society is harsh, cruel, and repulsive. In any case, however, I saw that part of her injuries might easily have been redressed ; and I urged her often and earnestly to lay her complaint before a magistrate : friendless as she was, I assured her that she would meet with immediate attention ; and that English justice, which was no respecter of persons, would speedily and amply avenge her on the brutal ruffian who had plundered her little property. She promised me often that she would ; but she delayed taking the steps I pointed out from time to time : for she was timid and dejected to a degree which showed

how deeply sorrow had taken hold of her young heart : and perhaps she thought justly that the most upright judge, and the most righteous tribunals, could do nothing to repair her heaviest wrongs. Something, however, would perhaps have been done : for it had been settled between us at length, but unhappily on the very last time but one that I was ever to see her, that in a day or two we should go together before a magistrate, and that I should speak on her behalf. This little service it was destined, however, that I should never realise. Meantime, that which she rendered to me, and which was greater than I could ever have repaid her, was this :—One night, when we were pacing slowly along Oxford-street, and after a day when I had felt more than usually ill and faint, I requested her to turn off with me into Soho-square : thither we went ; and we sat down on the steps of a house, which, to this hour, I never pass without a pang of grief, and an inner act of homage to the spirit of that unhappy girl, in memory of the noble action which she there performed. Suddenly, as we sat, I grew much worse : I had been leaning my head against her bosom ; and all at once I sank from her arms and fell backwards on the steps. From the sensations I then had, I felt an inner con-

viction of the liveliest kind that without some powerful and reviving stimulus, I should either have died on the spot—or should at least have sunk to a point of exhaustion from which all re-ascent under my friendless circumstances would soon have become hopeless. Then it was, at this crisis of my fate, that my poor orphan companion—who had herself met with little but injuries in this world—stretched out a saving hand to me. Uttering a cry of terror, but without a moment's delay, she ran off into Oxford-street, and in less time than could be imagined, returned to me with a glass of port wine and spices, that acted upon my empty stomach (which at that time would have rejected all solid food) with an instantaneous power of restoration : and for this glass the generous girl without a murmur paid out of her own humble purse at a time—be it remembered !—when she had scarcely wherewithal to purchase the bare necessities of life, and when she could have no reason to expect that I should ever be able to reimburse her.——Oh ! youthful benefactress ! how often in succeeding years, standing in solitary places, and thinking of thee with grief of heart and perfect love, how often have I wished that, as in ancient times the curse of a father was believed to have a supernatural power,

and to pursue its object with a fatal necessity of self-fulfilment,—even so the benediction of a heart oppressed with gratitude might have a like prerogative; might have power given it from above to chase—to haunt—to way-lay—to overtake—to pursue thee into the central darkness of a London brothel, or, if it were possible, into the darkness of the grave—there to awaken thee with an authentic message of peace and forgiveness, and of final reconciliation!

I do not often weep: for not only do my thoughts on subjects connected with the chief interests of man daily, nay hourly, descend a thousand fathoms “too deep for tears;” not only does the sternness of my habits of thought present an antagonism to the feelings which prompt tears—wanting of necessity to those who, being protected usually by their levity from any tendency to meditative sorrow, would by that same levity be made incapable of resisting it on any casual access of such feelings:—but also, I believe that all minds which have contemplated such objects as deeply as I have done, must, for their own protection from utter despondency, have early encouraged and cherished some tranquillizing belief as to the future balances and the hieroglyphic meanings of human sufferings. On these accounts, I am cheerful to this hour;

and, as I have said, I do not often weep. Yet some feelings, though not deeper or more passionate, are more tender than others; and often, when I walk at this time in Oxford-street by dreamy lamp-light, and hear those airs played on a barrel-organ which years ago solaced me and my dear companion, as I must always call her, I shed tears, and muse with myself at the mysterious dispensation which so suddenly and so critically separated us for ever. How it happened, the reader will understand from what remains of this introductory narration.

Soon after the period of the last incident I have recorded, I met, in Albemarle-street, a gentleman of his late majesty's household. This gentleman had received hospitalities, on different occasions, from my family: and he challenged me upon the strength of my family likeness. I did not attempt any disguise: I answered his questions ingenuously,—and, on his pledging his word of honour that he would not betray me to my guardians, I gave him an address to my friend the attorney's. The next day I received from him a £10 Bank-note. The letter enclosing it was delivered with other letters of business to the attorney; but, though his look and manner informed me that he suspected its contents, he gave it up to me honourably and without demur.

This present, from the particular service to which it was applied, leads me naturally to speak of the purpose which had allured me up to London, and which I had been (to use a forensic word) *soliciting* from the first day of my arrival in London, to that of my final departure.

In so mighty a world as London, it will surprise my readers that I should not have found some means of staving off the last extremities of penury : and it will strike them that two resources at least must have been open to me,—viz. either to seek assistance from the friends of my family, or to turn my youthful talents and attainments into some channel of pecuniary emolument. As to the first course, I may observe, generally, that what I dreaded beyond all other evils was the chance of being reclaimed by my guardians ; not doubting that whatever power the law gave them would have been enforced against me to the utmost ; that is, to the extremity of forcibly restoring me to the school which I had quitted : a restoration which as it would in my eyes have been a dishonour, even if submitted to voluntarily, could not fail, when extorted from me in contempt and defiance of my known wishes and efforts, to have been a humiliation worse to me than death, and which would indeed have terminated in death. I was,

therefore, shy enough of applying for assistance even in those quarters where I was sure of receiving it—at the risk of furnishing my guardians with any clue for recovering me. But, as to London in particular, though, doubtless, my father had in his life-time had many friends there, yet, as ten years had passed since his death, I remembered few of them even by name : and never having seen London before, except once for a few hours, I knew not the address of even those few. To this mode of gaining help, therefore, in part the difficulty, but much more the paramount fear which I have mentioned, habitually indisposed me. In regard to the other mode, I now feel half inclined to join my reader in wondering that I should have overlooked it. As a corrector of Greek proofs, if in no other way, I might doubtless have gained enough for my slender wants. Such an office as this I could have discharged with an exemplary and punctual accuracy that would soon have gained me the confidence of my employers. But it must not be forgotten that, even for such an office as this, it was necessary that I should first of all have an introduction to some respectable publisher : and this I had no means of obtaining. To say the truth, however, it had never once occurred to me to think of literary labours

as a source of profit. No mode sufficiently speedy of obtaining money had ever occurred to me, but that of borrowing it on the strength of my future claims and expectations. This mode I sought by every avenue to compass, and amongst other persons I applied to a Jew named D—.

To this Jew, and to other advertising money-lenders, some of whom were, I believe, also Jews, I had introduced myself with an account of my expectations; which account, on examining my father's will at Doctor's Commons, they had ascertained to be correct. The person there mentioned as the second son of —, was found to have all the claims, or more than all, that I had stated: but one question still remained, which the faces of the Jews pretty significantly suggested,—was / that person? This doubt had never occurred to me as a possible one: I had rather feared, whenever my Jewish friends scrutinized me keenly, that I might be too well known to be that person—and that some scheme might be passing in their minds for entrapping me, and selling me to my guardians. It was strange to me to find my own self, *materialiter* considered (so I expressed it, for I doted on logical accuracy of distinctions), accused, or at least suspected, of counterfeiting

my own self, *formaliter* considered. However, to satisfy their scruples, I took the only course in my power. Whilst I was in Wales, I had received various letters from young friends : these I produced : for I carried them constantly in my pocket—being, indeed, by this time, almost the only relics of my personal incumbances (excepting the clothes I wore) which I had not in one way or other disposed of. Most of these letters were from the Earl of [Altamont], who was at that time my chief, or rather only, confidential friend. These letters were dated from Eton. I had also some from the Marquess of Sligo, his father, who, though absorbed in agricultural pursuits, yet having been an Etonian himself, and as good a scholar as a nobleman needs to be—still retained an affection for classical studies, and for youthful scholars. He had, accordingly, from the time that I was fifteen, corresponded with me ; sometimes upon the great improvements which he had made, or was meditating, in the counties of Mayo and Sligo since I had been there ; sometimes upon the merits of a Latin poet ; at other times suggesting subjects to me on which he wished me to write verses.

On reading the letters, one of my Jewish friends agreed to furnish two or three hundred

pounds on my personal security—provided I could persuade the young Earl, who was, by the way, not older than myself, to guarantee the payment on our coming of age : the Jew's final object being, as I now suppose, not the trifling profit he could expect to make by me, but the prospect of establishing a connexion with my noble friend, whose immense expectations were well known to him. In pursuance of this proposal on the part of the Jew, about eight or nine days after I had received the £10, I prepared to go down to Eton. Nearly £3 of the money I had given to my money-lending friend, on his alleging that the stamps must be bought, in order that the writings might be preparing whilst I was away from London. I thought in my heart that he was lying ; but I did not wish to give him any excuse for charging his own delays upon me. A smaller sum I had given to my friend the attorney, who was connected with the money-lenders as their lawyer, to which, indeed, he was entitled for his unfurnished lodgings. About fifteen shillings I had employed in re-establishing, though in a very humble way, my dress. Of the remainder I gave one quarter to Ann, meaning on my return to have divided with her whatever might remain. These arrangements made,—soon after six o'clock, on a

dark winter evening, I set off, accompanied by Ann, towards Piccadilly ; for it was my intention to go down as far as Salt-hill on the Bath or Bristol mail. Our course lay through a part of the town which has now all disappeared, so that I can no longer retrace its ancient boundaries : Swallow-street, I think it was called. Having time enough before us, however, we bore away to the left until we came into Golden-square : there, near the corner of Sherrard-street, we sat down ; not wishing to part in the tumult and blaze of Piccadilly. I had told her of my plans some time before : and I now assured her again that she should share in my good fortune, if I met with any ; and that I would never forsake her, as soon as I had power to protect her. This I fully intended, as much from inclination as from a sense of duty : for, setting aside gratitude, which in any case must have made me her debtor for life, I loved her as affectionately as if she had been my sister : and at this moment, with sevenfold tenderness, from pity at witnessing her extreme dejection. I had, apparently, most reason for dejection, because I was leaving the saviour of my life : yet I, considering the shock my health had received, was cheerful and full of hope. She, on the contrary, who was parting with one who had little means of serving

her, except by kindness and brotherly treatment, was overcome by sorrow ; so that, when I kissed her at our final farewell, she put her arms about my neck, and wept without speaking a word. I hoped to return in a week at farthest, and I agreed with her that on the fifth night from that, and every night afterwards, she should wait for me at six o'clock near the bottom of Great Titchfield-street, which had been our customary haven, as it were, of rendezvous, to prevent our missing each other in the great Mediterranean of Oxford-street. This, and other measures of precaution I took : one only I forgot. She had either never told me, or (as a matter of no great interest) I had forgotten, her surname. It is a general practice, indeed, with girls of humble rank in her unhappy condition, not (as novel-reading women of higher pretensions) to style themselves—*Miss Douglas*, *Miss Montague*, etc. but simply by their Christian names, *Mary*, *Jane*, *Frances*, etc. Her surname, as the surest means of tracing her hereafter, I ought now to have inquired : but the truth is, having no reason to think that our meeting could, in consequence of a short interruption, be more difficult or uncertain than it had been for so many weeks, I had scarcely for a moment adverted to it as necessary, or placed it amongst my memoranda

against this parting interview : and, my final anxieties being spent in comforting her with hopes, and in pressing upon her the necessity of getting some medicines for a violent cough and hoarseness with which she was troubled, I wholly forgot it until it was too late to recal her.

It was past eight o'clock when I reached the Gloucester coffee-house : and, the Bristol mail being on the point of going off, I mounted on the outside. The fine fluent motion of this mail soon laid me asleep : it is somewhat remarkable that the first easy or refreshing sleep which I had enjoyed for some months was on the outside of a mail-coach—a bed which, at this day, I find rather an uneasy one. Connected with this sleep was a little incident, which served, as hundreds of others did at that time, to convince me how easily a man who has never been in any great distress may pass through life without knowing, in his own person at least, any thing of the possible goodness of the human heart—or, as I must add with a sigh, of its possible vileness. So thick a curtain of *manners* is drawn over the features and expression of men's *natures*, that to the ordinary observer the two extremities, and the infinite field of varieties which lie between them, are all confounded—the vast and multitudinous compass of their several

harmonies reduced to the meagre outline of differences expressed in the gamut or alphabet of elementary sounds. The case was this : for the first four or five miles from London, I annoyed my fellow-passenger on the roof by occasionally falling against him when the coach gave a lurch to his side ; and indeed, if the road had been less smooth and level than it is, I should have fallen off from weakness. Of this annoyance he complained heavily, as perhaps in the same circumstances most people would ; he expressed his complaint, however, more morosely than the occasion seemed to warrant ; and, if I had parted with him at that moment, I should have thought of him, if I had considered it worth while to think of him at all, as a surly and almost brutal fellow. However, I was conscious that I had given him some cause for complaint : and, therefore, I apologized to him, and assured him I would do what I could to avoid falling asleep for the future ; and, at the same time, in as few words as possible, I explained to him that I was ill and in a weak state from long suffering ; and that I could not afford at that time to take an inside place. The man's manner changed, upon hearing this explanation, in an instant : and when I next woke for a minute from the noise and lights of Hounslow (for in

spite of my wishes and efforts I had fallen asleep again within two minutes from the time I had spoken to him), I found that he had put his arm round me to protect me from falling off : and for the rest of my journey he behaved to me with the gentleness of a woman, so that, at length, I almost lay in his arms : and this was the more kind, as he could not have known that I was not going the whole way to Bath or Bristol. Unfortunately, indeed, I *did* go rather farther than I intended : for so genial and refreshing was my sleep, that the next time after leaving Hounslow that I fully awoke, was upon the sudden pulling up of the mail, possibly at a post-office ; and, on inquiry, I found that we had reached Maidenhead—six or seven miles, I think, a-head of Salt-hill. Here I alighted : and for the half minute that the mail stopped, I was entreated by my friendly companion, who, from the transient glimpse I had had of him in Piccadilly, seemed to me to be a gentleman's butler—or person of that rank, to go to bed without delay. This I promised, though with no intention of doing so : and in fact, I immediately set forward, or rather backward, on foot. It must then have been nearly midnight : but so slowly did I creep along, that I heard a clock in a cottage strike four before I

turned down the lane from Slough to Eton. The air and the sleep had both refreshed me ; but I was weary nevertheless. I remember a thought, obvious enough, and which has been prettily expressed by a Roman poet, which gave me some consolation at that moment under my poverty. There had been some time before a murder committed on or near Hounslow-heath. I think I cannot be mistaken when I say that the name of the murdered person was Steele, and that he was the owner of a lavender plantation in that neighbourhood. Every step of my progress was bringing me nearer to the heath : and it naturally occurred to me that I and the accursed murderer, if he were that night abroad, might at every instant be unconsciously approaching each other through the darkness : in which case, said I,—supposing that I, instead of being, as indeed I am, little better than an outcast,—

Lord of my learning and no land beside,

were, like my friend, Lord [Altamont], heir by general repute to £70,000 per ann., what a panic should I be under at this moment about my throat !—indeed, it was not likely that Lord Altamont should ever be in my situation. But nevertheless, the spirit of the remark remains

true—that vast power and possessions make a man shamefully afraid of dying : and I am convinced that many of the most intrepid adventurers who, by fortunately being poor, enjoy the full use of their natural courage, would, if at the very instant of going into action news were brought to them that they had unexpectedly succeeded to an estate in England of £50,000 a year, feel their dislike to bullets considerably sharpened—and their efforts at perfect equanimity and self-possession proportionably difficult. So true it is, in the language of a wise man whose own experience had made him acquainted with both fortunes, that riches are better fitted—

To slacken virtue, and abate her edge,
Than tempt her to do aught may merit praise.

Paradise Regained.

I dally with my subject because, to myself, the remembrance of these times is profoundly interesting. But my reader shall not have any further cause to complain : for I now hasten to its close.—In the road between Slough and Eton, I fell asleep : and, just as the morning began to dawn, I was awakened by the voice of a man standing over me and surveying me. I know not what he was : he was an ill-looking

fellow—but not therefore of necessity an ill-meaning fellow : or, if he were, I suppose he thought that no person sleeping out-of-doors in winter could be worth robbing. In which conclusion, however, as it regarded myself, I beg to assure him, if he should be among my readers, that he was mistaken. After a slight remark he passed on : and I was not sorry at his disturbance, as it enabled me to pass through Eton before people were generally up. The night had been heavy and lowering : but towards the morning it had changed to a slight frost : and the ground and the trees were now covered with rime. I slipped through Eton unobserved ; washed myself, and, as far as possible, adjusted my dress at a little public-house in Windsor ; and about eight o'clock went down towards Pote's. On my road I met some junior boys of whom I made inquiries : an Etonian is always a gentleman ; and, in spite of my shabby habiliments, they answered me civilly. My friend, Lord [Altamont], was gone to the University of Cambridge. "*Ibi omnis effusus labor!*" I had, however, other friends at Eton : but it is not to all who wear that name in prosperity that a man is willing to present himself in distress. On recollecting myself, however, I asked for the Earl of D[esart], to whom (though my acquaint-

tance with him was not so intimate as with some others) I should not have shrunk from presenting myself under any circumstances. He was still at Eton, though I believe on the wing for Cambridge. I called, was received kindly, and asked to breakfast.

Here let me stop for a moment to check my reader from any erroneous conclusions : because I have had occasion incidentally to speak of various patrician friends, it must not be supposed that I have myself any pretensions to rank or high blood. I thank God that I have not :—I am the son of a plain English merchant, esteemed during his life for his great integrity, and strongly attached to literary pursuits, indeed, he was himself, anonymously, an author : if he had lived, it was expected that he would have been very rich ; but, dying prematurely, he left no more than about £30,000 amongst seven different claimants. My mother I may mention with honour, as still more highly gifted. For, though unpretending to the name and honours of a *literary* woman, I shall presume to call her (what many literary women are not) an *intellectual* woman : and I believe that if ever her letters should be collected and published, they would be thought generally to exhibit as much strong and masculine sense, delivered in as pure

"mother English," racy and fresh with idiomatic graces, as any in our language—hardly excepting those of Lady M. W. Montague.—These are my honours of descent : I have no others : and I have thanked God sincerely that I have not, because, in my judgment, a station which raises a man too eminently above the level of his fellow-creatures is not the most favourable to moral, or to intellectual qualities.

Lord D[esart] placed before me a most magnificent breakfast. It was really so ; but in my eyes it seemed trebly magnificent—from being the first regular meal, the first "good man's table," that I had sat down to for months. Strange to say, however, I could scarcely eat any thing. On the day when I first received my £10 bank-note, I had gone to a baker's shop and bought a couple of rolls : this very shop I had two months or six weeks before surveyed with an eagerness of desire which it was almost humiliating to me to recollect. I remembered the story about Otway ; and feared that there might be danger in eating too rapidly. But I had no need for alarm, my appetite was quite sunk, and I became sick before I had eaten half of what I had bought. This effect from eating what approached to a meal, I continued to feel for weeks : or, when I did not experience any

nausea, part of what I ate was rejected, sometimes with acidity, sometimes immediately, and without any acidity. On the present occasion, at Lord D[esart]'s table, I found myself not at all better than usual : and, in the midst of luxuries, I had no appetite. I had, however, unfortunately, at all times a craving for wine : I explained my situation, therefore, to Lord D[esart], and gave him a short account of my late sufferings, at which he expressed great compassion, and called for wine. This gave me a momentary relief and pleasure ; and on all occasions when I had an opportunity, I never failed to drink wine—which I worshipped then as I have since worshipped opium. I am convinced, however, that this indulgence in wine contributed to strengthen my malady ; for the tone of my stomach was apparently quite sunk ; but by a better regimen it might sooner, and perhaps effectually, have been revived. I hope that it was not from this love of wine that I lingered in the neighbourhood of my Eton friends : I persuaded myself *then* that it was from reluctance to ask of Lord D[esart], on whom I was conscious I had not sufficient claims, the particular service in quest of which I had come down to Eton. I was, however, unwilling to lose my journey, and—I asked it. Lord D[esart], whose good nature was

unbounded, and which, in regard to myself, had been measured rather by his compassion perhaps for my condition, and his knowledge of my intimacy with some of his relatives, than by an over rigorous inquiry into the extent of my own direct claims, faltered, nevertheless, at this request. He acknowledged that he did not like to have any dealings with money-lenders, and feared lest such a transaction might come to the ears of his connexions. Moreover, he doubted whether *his* signature, whose expectations were so much more bounded than those of his cousin, would avail with my unchristian friends. However, he did not wish, as it seemed, to mortify me by an absolute refusal : for after a little consideration, he promised, under certain conditions which he pointed out, to give his security. Lord D[esart] was at this time not eighteen years of age : but I have often doubted, on recollecting since the good sense and prudence which on this occasion he mingled with so much urbanity of manner, an urbanity which in him wore the grace of youthful sincerity, whether any statesman—the oldest and the most accomplished in diplomacy—could have acquitted himself better under the same circumstances. Most people, indeed, cannot be addressed on such a business without surveying

you with looks as austere and unpropitious as those of a Saracen's head.

Recomforted by this promise, which was not quite equal to the best, but far above the worst that I had pictured to myself as possible, I returned in a Windsor coach to London three days after I had quitted it. And now I come to the end of my story :—the Jews did not approve of Lord D[esart]'s terms ; whether they would in the end have acceded to them, and were only seeking time for making due inquiries, I know not ; but many delays were made—time passed on—the small fragment of my Bank-note had just melted away ; and before any conclusion could have been put to the business, I must have relapsed into my former state of wretchedness. Suddenly, however, at this crisis, an opening was made, almost by accident, for reconciliation with my friends. I quitted London, in haste, for a remote part of England : after some time, I proceeded to the university ; and it was not until many months had passed away that I had it in my power again to revisit the ground which had become so interesting to me, and to this day remains so, as the chief scene of my youthful sufferings.

Meantime, what had become of poor Ann ? For her I have reserved my concluding words :

according to our agreement, I sought her daily, and waited for her every night, so long as I staid in London, at the corner of Titchfield-street. I inquired for her of every one who was likely to know her ; and during the last hours of my stay in London I put into activity every means of tracing her that my knowledge of London suggested, and the limited extent of my power made possible. The street where she had lodged I knew, but not the house ; and I remembered at last some account which she had given me of ill treatment from her landlord, which made it probable that she had quitted those lodgings before we parted. She had few acquaintance ; most people, besides, thought that the earnestness of my inquiries arose from motives which moved their laughter, or their slight regard ; and others, thinking I was in chase of a girl who had robbed me of some trifles, were naturally and excusably indisposed to give me any clue to her, if, indeed, they had any to give. Finally, as my despairing resource, on the day I left London I put into the hands of the only person who (I was sure) must know Ann by sight, from having been in company with us once or twice, an address to — in — shire, at that time the residence of my family. But, to this hour, I have never heard a syllable about her. This,

amongst such troubles as most men meet with in this life, has been my heaviest affliction.—If she lived, doubtless we must have been sometimes in search of each other, at the very same moment, through the mighty labyrinths of London ; perhaps even within a few feet of each other—a barrier no wider in a London street often amounting in the end to a separation for eternity! During some years, I hoped that she *did* live; and I suppose that, in the literal and unrhetoical use of the word *myriad*, I may say that on my different visits to London, I have looked into many, many myriads of female faces, in the hope of meeting her. I should know her again amongst a thousand, if I saw her for a moment ; for, though not handsome, she had a sweet expression of countenance, and a peculiar and graceful carriage of the head.—I sought her, I have said, in hope. So it was for years ; but now I should fear to see her ; and her cough, which grieved me when I parted with her, is now my consolation. I now wish to see her no longer ; but think of her, more gladly, as one long since laid in the grave ; in the grave, I would hope, of a Magdalen ; taken away, before injuries and cruelty had blotted out and transfigured her ingenuous nature, or the brutalities of ruffians had completed the ruin they had begun.

PART II.

So then, Oxford-street, stony-hearted step-mother ! thou that listenest to the sighs of orphans, and drinkest the tears of children, at length I was dismissed from thee : the time was come at last that I no more should pace in anguish thy never-ending terraces ; no more should dream, and wake in captivity to the pangs of hunger. Successors, too many, to myself and Ann, have, doubtless, since trodden in our footsteps,—inheritors of our calamities : other orphans than Ann have sighed : tears have been shed by other children : and thou, Oxford-street, hast since, doubtless, echoed to the groans of innumerable hearts. For myself, however, the storm which I had outlived seemed to have been the pledge of a long fair-weather ; the premature sufferings which I had paid down to have been accepted as a ransom for many years to come, as a price of long immunity from sorrow : and if again I walked in London, a

solitary and contemplative man (as oftentimes I did), I walked for the most part in serenity and peace of mind. And, although it is true that the calamities of my noviciate in London had struck root so deeply in my bodily constitution that afterwards they shot up and flourished afresh, and grew into a noxious umbrage that has overshadowed and darkened my latter years, yet these second assaults of suffering were met with a fortitude more confirmed, with the resources of a maturer intellect, and with alleviations from sympathising affection—how deep and tender !

Thus, however, with whatsoever alleviations, years that were far asunder were bound together by subtle links of suffering derived from a common root. And herein I notice an instance of the short-sightedness of human desires, that oftentimes on moonlight nights, during my first mournful abode in London, my consolation was (if such it could be thought) to gaze from Oxford-street up every avenue in succession which pierces through the heart of Marylebone to the fields and the woods ; and *that*, said I, travelling with my eyes up the long vistas which lay part in light and part in shade, "*that* is the road to the north, and therefore to ———, and if I had the wings of a dove, *that* way I would fly for comfort." Thus I said, and thus I wished, in

my blindness ; yet, even in that very northern region it was, even in that very valley, nay, in that very house to which my erroneous wishes pointed, that this second birth of my sufferings began ; and that they again threatened to besiege the citadel of life and hope. There it was, that for years I was persecuted by visions as ugly, and as ghastly phantoms as ever haunted the couch of an Orestes : and in this unhappier than he, that sleep which comes to all as a respite and a restoration, and to him especially, as a blessed balm for his wounded heart and his haunted brain (*φίλον ύπνου θελγητρων επικουρον νοσου*), visited me as my bitterest scourge. Thus blind was I in my desires ; yet, if a veil interposes between the dim-sightedness of man and his future calamities, the same veil hides from him their alleviations ; and a grief which had not been feared is met by consolations which had not been hoped. I, therefore, who participated, as it were, in the troubles of Orestes (excepting only in his agitated conscience), participated no less in all his supports : my Eumenides, like his, were at my bed-feet, and stared in upon me through the curtains : but, watching by my pillow, or defrauding herself of sleep to bear me company through the heavy watches of the night, sat my Electra : for thou, beloved [Mar-

garet], dear companion of my later years, thou wast my Electra ! and neither in nobility of mind nor in long-suffering affection, wouldst permit that a Grecian sister should excel an English wife. For thou thoughtest not much to stoop to humble offices of kindness, and to servile ministrations of tenderest affection ;—to wipe away for years the unwholesome dew upon the forehead, or to refresh the lips when parched and baked with fever ; nor, even when thy own peaceful slumbers had by long sympathy become infected with the spectacle of my dread contest with phantoms and shadowy enemies that oftentimes bade me “sleep no more !”—not even then, didst thou utter a complaint or any murmur, nor withdraw thy angelic smiles, nor shrink from thy service of love more than Electra did of old. For she too, though she was a Grecian woman, and the daughter of the king of men, yet wept sometimes, and hid her face in her robe.

But these troubles are past : and thou wilt read these records of a period so dolorous to us both as the legend of some hideous dream that can return no more. Meantime, I am again in London : and again I pace the terraces of Oxford-street by night : and oftentimes, when I am oppressed by anxieties that demand all my philosophy and the comfort of thy presence to sup-

port, and yet remember that I am separated from thee by three hundred miles, and the length of three dreary months,—I look up the streets that run northwards from Oxford-street, upon moon-light nights, and recollect my youthful ejaculation of anguish;—and remembering that thou art sitting alone in that same valley, and mistress of that very house to which my heart turned in its blindness nineteen years ago, I think that, though blind indeed, and scattered to the winds of late, the promptings of my heart may yet have had reference to a remoter time, and may be justified if read in another meaning :—and, if I could allow myself to descend again to the impotent wishes of childhood, I should again say to myself, as I look to the north, “Oh, that I had the wings of a dove—” and with how just a confidence in thy good and gracious nature might I add the other half of my early ejaculation—“And *that* way I would fly for comfort.”

THE PLEASURES OF OPIUM.

It is so long since I first took opium that if it had been a trifling incident in my life I might have forgotten its date : but cardinal events are not to be forgotten ; and from circumstances connected with it I remember that it must be referred to the autumn of 1804. During that season I was in London, having come thither for the first time since my entrance at college. And my introduction to opium arose in the following way. From an early age I had been accustomed to wash my head in cold water at least once a day : being suddenly seized with tooth-ache, I attributed it to some relaxation caused by an accidental intermission of that practice ; jumped out of bed ; plunged my head into a basin of cold water ; and with hair thus wetted went to sleep. The next morning, as I need hardly say, I awoke with excruciating rheumatic pains of the head and face, from which I had hardly any respite for about twenty days. On the twenty-first day, I think it was, and on a Sunday, that I went out into the streets ; rather to run away, if possible, from my torments, than with any distinct purpose. By accident I met

a college acquaintance who recommended opium. Opium ! dread agent of unimaginable pleasure and pain ! I had heard of it as I had of manna or of ambrosia, but no further : how unmeaning a sound was it at that time ! what solemn chords does it now strike upon my heart ! what heart-quaking vibrations of sad and happy remembrances ! Reverting for a moment to these, I feel a mystic importance attached to the minutest circumstances connected with the place and the time, and the man, if man he was, that first laid open to me the Paradise of Opium-eaters. It was a Sunday afternoon, wet and cheerless : and a duller spectacle this earth of ours has not to show than a rainy Sunday in London. My road homewards lay through Oxford-street ; and near "the *stately* Pantheon," as Mr. Wordsworth has obligingly called it, I saw a druggist's shop. The druggist, unconscious minister of celestial pleasures !—as if in sympathy with the rainy Sunday, looked dull and stupid, just as any mortal druggist might be expected to look on a Sunday : and, when I asked for the tincture of opium, he gave it to me as any other man might do : and furthermore, out of my shilling, returned me what seemed to be real copper halfpence, taken out of a real wooden drawer. Nevertheless, in spite of such indications of humanity, he has

ever since existed in my mind as the beatific vision of an immortal druggist, sent down to earth on a special mission to myself. And it confirms me in this way of considering him, that, when I next came up to London, I sought him near the stately Pantheon, and found him not : and thus to me, who knew not his name (if indeed he had one) he seemed rather to have vanished from Oxford-street than to have removed in any bodily fashion. The reader may choose to think of him as, possibly, no more than a sublunary druggist : it may be so : but my faith is better : I believe him to have evanesced, or evaporated. So unwillingly would I connect any mortal remembrances with that hour, and place, and creature, that first brought me acquainted with the celestial drug.

Arrived at my lodgings, it may be supposed that I lost not a moment in taking the quantity prescribed. I was necessarily ignorant of the whole art and mystery of opium-taking : and, what I took, I took under every disadvantage. But I took it :—and in an hour, oh ! heavens ! what a revulsion ! what an upheaving, from its lowest depths, of the inner spirit ! what an apocalypse of the world within me ! That my pains had vanished, was now a trifle in my eyes :—this negative effect was swallowed up in

the immensity of those positive effects which had opened before me—in the abyss of divine enjoyment thus suddenly revealed. Here was a panacea—a *φάρμακον νήπιενθις* for all human woes : here was the secret of happiness, about which philosophers had disputed for so many ages, at once discovered : happiness might now be bought for a penny, and carried in the waistcoat pocket : portable ecstasies might be had corked up in a pint bottle : and peace of mind could be sent down in gallons by the mail coach. But, if I talk in this way, the reader will think I am laughing : and I can assure him, that nobody will laugh long who deals much with opium : its pleasures even are of a grave and solemn complexion ; and in his happiest state, the opium-eater cannot present himself in the character of *L'Allegro* : even then, he speaks and thinks as becomes *Il Penseroso*. Nevertheless, I have a very reprehensible way of jesting at times in the midst of my own misery : and, unless when I am checked by some more powerful feelings, I am afraid I shall be guilty of this indecent practice even in these annals of suffering or enjoyment. The reader must allow a little to my infirm nature in this respect : and with a few indulgences of that sort, I shall endeavour to be as grave, if not drowsy, as fits a theme

like opium, so anti-mercurial as it really is, and so drowsy as it is falsely reputed.

And, first, one word with respect to its bodily effects : for upon all that has been hitherto written on the subject of opium, whether by travellers in Turkey, who may plead their privilege of lying as an old immemorial right, or by professors of medicine, writing *ex cathedra*,—I have but one emphatic criticism to pronounce—Lies! lies! lies! I remember once, in passing a book-stall, to have caught these words from a page of some satiric author :—“By this time I became convinced that the London newspapers spoke truth at least twice a week, viz. on Tuesday and Saturday, and might safely be depended upon for —— the list of bankrupts.” In like manner, I do by no means deny that some truths have been delivered to the world in regard to opium : thus it has been repeatedly affirmed by the learned that opium is a dusky brown in colour ; and this, take notice, I grant : secondly, that it is rather dear ; which I also grant : for in my time, East-India opium has been three guineas a pound, and Turkey eight : and, thirdly, that if you eat a good deal of it, most probably you must do what is particularly disagreeable to any man of regular habits, viz., die. These weighty propo-

sitions are, all and singular, true : I cannot gainsay them : and truth ever was, and will be, commendable. But in these three theorems, I believe we have exhausted the stock of knowledge as yet accumulated by man on the subject of opium. And therefore, worthy doctors, as there seems to be room for further discoveries, stand aside, and allow me to come forward and lecture on this matter.

First, then, it is not so much affirmed as taken for granted by all who ever mention opium, formally or incidentally, that it does, or can, produce intoxication. Now, reader, assure yourself, *meo periculo*, that no quantity of opium ever did, or could intoxicate. As to the tincture of opium (commonly called laudanum) *that* might certainly intoxicate if a man could bear to take enough of it ; but why ? because it contains so much proof spirit, and not because it contains so much opium. But crude opium, I affirm peremptorily, is incapable of producing any state of body at all resembling that which is produced by alcohol : and not in *degree* only incapable, but even in *kind* : it is not in the quantity of its effects merely, but in the quality, that it differs altogether. The pleasure given by wine is always mounting, and tending to a crisis, after which it declines : that from opium,

when once generated, is stationary for eight or ten hours : the first, to borrow a technical distinction from medicine, is a case of acute—the second, of chronic pleasure : the one is a flame, the other a steady and equable glow. But the main distinction lies in this, that whereas wine disorders the mental faculties, opium, on the contrary, if taken in a proper manner, introduces amongst them the most exquisite order, legislation, and harmony. Wine robs a man of his self-possession : opium greatly invigorates it. Wine unsettles and clouds the judgment, and gives a preternatural brightness and a vivid exaltation to the contempts and the admirations, the loves and the hatreds, of the drinker : opium on the contrary communicates serenity and equipoise to all the faculties, active or passive : and with respect to the temper and moral feelings in general, it gives simply that sort of vital warmth which is approved by the judgment, and which would probably always accompany a bodily constitution of primeval or antediluvian health. Thus, for instance, opium, like wine, gives an expansion to the heart and the benevolent affections : but then, with this remarkable difference, that in the sudden development of kind-heartedness which accompanies inebriation, there is always more or less of a

maudlin character, which exposes it to the contempt of the by-stander. Men shake hands, swear eternal friendship, and shed tears—no mortal knows why : and the sensual creature is clearly uppermost. But the expansion of the benigner feelings incident to opium, is no febrile access, but a healthy restoration to that state which the mind would naturally recover upon the removal of any deep-seated irritation of pain that had disturbed and quarrelled with the impulses of a heart originally just and good. True it is, that even wine, up to a certain point, and with certain men, rather tends to exalt and to steady the intellect : I myself, who have never been a great wine-drinker, used to find that half a dozen glasses of wine advantageously affected the faculties—brightened and intensified the consciousness—and gave to the mind a feeling of being “*ponderibus librata suis* :” and certainly it is most absurdly said in popular language of any man that he is *disguised* in liquor : for, on the contrary, most men are disguised by sobriety ; and it is when they are drinking (as some old gentleman says in Athenæus), that men *ἐντροχὲς ἐμφανίζουσιν οἱ τινες εἰς*—display themselves in their true complexion of character ; which surely is not disguising themselves. But still, wine constantly leads a man to the brink of absurdity

and extravagance ; and, beyond a certain point, it is sure to volatilize and to disperse the intellectual energies : whereas opium always seems to compose what had been agitated, and to concentrate what had been distracted. In short, to sum up all in one word, a man who is inebriated, or tending to inebriation, is, and feels that he is, in a condition which calls up into supremacy the merely human, too often the brutal, part of his nature : but the opium-eater (I speak of him who is not suffering from any disease, or other remote effects of opium,) feels that the diviner part of his nature is paramount ; that is, the moral affections are in a state of cloudless serenity ; and over all is the great light of the majestic intellect.

This is the doctrine of the true church on the subject of opium : of which church I acknowledge myself to be the only member—the alpha and the omega : but then it is to be recollected that I speak from the ground of a large and profound personal experience : whereas most of the unscientific authors who have at all treated of opium, and even of those who have written expressly on the *materia medica*, make it evident, from the horror they express of it, that their experimental knowledge of its action is none at all. I will, however, candidly acknow-

ledge that I have met with one person who bore evidence to its intoxicating power, such as staggered my own incredulity : for he was a surgeon, and had himself taken opium largely. I happened to say to him that his enemies, as I had heard, charged him with talking nonsense on politics, and that his friends apologized for him by suggesting that he was constantly in a state of intoxication from opium. Now the accusation, said I, is not *prima facie*, and of necessity, an absurd one : but the defence *is*. To my surprise, however, he insisted that both his enemies and his friends were in the right : " I will maintain," said he, " that I *do* talk nonsense ; and secondly, I will maintain that I do not talk nonsense upon principle, or with any view to profit, but solely and simply," said he, " solely and simply,—solely and simply " (repeating it three times over), " because I am drunk with opium ; and *that* daily." I replied that, as to the allegation of his enemies, as it seemed to be established upon such respectable testimony, seeing that the three parties concerned all agreed in it, it did not become me to question it ; but the defence set up I must demur to. He proceeded to discuss the matter, and to lay down his reasons ; but it seemed to me so impolite to pursue an argument which must have presumed a man mis-

taken in a point belonging to his own profession, that I did not press him even when his course of argument seemed open to objection : not to mention that a man who talks nonsense, even though "with no view to profit," is not altogether the most agreeable partner in a dispute, whether as opponent or respondent. I confess, however, that the authority of a surgeon, and one who was reputed a good one, may seem a weighty one to my prejudice : but still I must plead my experience, which was greater than his greatest by 7,000 drops a day ; and, though it was not possible to suppose a medical man unacquainted with the characteristic symptoms of vinous intoxication, it yet struck me that he might proceed on a logical error of using the word intoxication with too great latitude, and extending it generally to all modes of nervous excitement, instead of restricting it as the expression for a specific sort of excitement, connected with certain diagnostics. Some people have maintained, in my hearing, that they have been drunk upon green tea : and a medical student in London, for whose knowledge in his profession I have reason to feel great respect, assured me, the other day, that a patient, in recovering from an illness, had got drunk on a beef-steak.

Having dwelt so much on this first and leading error in respect to opium, I shall notice very

briefly a second and a third ; which are, that the elevation of spirits produced by opium is necessarily followed by a proportionate depression, and that the natural and even immediate consequence of opium is torpor and stagnation, animal and mental. The first of these errors I shall content myself with simply denying, assuring my reader, that for ten years, during which I took opium at intervals, the day succeeding to that on which I allowed myself this luxury was always a day of unusually good spirits.

With respect to the torpor supposed to follow, or rather, if we were to credit the numerous pictures of Turkish opium-eaters, to accompany the practice of opium-eating, I deny that also. Certainly, opium is classed under the head of narcotics ; and some such effect it may produce in the end : but the primary effects of opium are always, and in the highest degree, to excite and stimulate the system : this first stage of its action always lasted with me, during my noviciate, for upwards of eight hours ; so that it must be the fault of the opium-eater himself if he does not so time his exhibition of the dose, to speak medically, as that the whole weight of its narcotic influence may descend upon his sleep. Turkish opium-eaters, it seems, are absurd enough to sit, like so many equestrian statues, on

logs of wood as stupid as themselves. But that the reader may judge of the degree in which opium is likely to stupify the faculties of an Englishman, I shall, by way of treating the question illustratively, rather than argumentatively, describe the way in which I myself often passed an opium evening in London, during the period between 1804 and 1812. It will be seen, that at least opium did not move me to seek solitude, and much less to seek inactivity, or the torpid state of self-involution ascribed to the Turks. I give this account at the risk of being pronounced a crazy enthusiast or visionary : but I regard *that* little : I must desire my reader to bear in mind that I was a hard student, and at severe studies for all the rest of my time : and certainly I had a right occasionally to relaxations as well as other people : these, however, I allowed myself but seldom.

The late Duke of [Norfolk] used to say, "Next Friday, by the blessing of Heaven, I purpose to be drunk : " and in like manner I used to fix beforehand how often, within a given time, and when, I would commit a debauch of opium. This was seldom more than once in three weeks : for at that time I could not have ventured to call every day (as I did afterwards) for "*a glass of laudanum negus, warm, and without sugar.*" No : as I have said, I seldom drank laudanum,

at that time, more than once in three weeks : this was usually on a Tuesday or a Saturday night ; my reason for which was this. In those days Grassini sang at the Opera : and her voice was delightful to me beyond all that I had ever heard. I know not what may be the state of the Opera-house now, having never been within its walls for seven or eight years, but at that time it was by much the most pleasant place of public resort in London for passing an evening. Five shillings admitted one to the gallery, which was subject to far less annoyance than the pit of the theatres : the orchestra was distinguished by its sweet and melodious grandeur from all English orchestras, the composition of which, I confess, is not acceptable to my ear, from the predominance of the clangorous instruments, and the absolute tyranny of the violin. The choruses were divine to hear : and when Grassini appeared in some interlude, as she often did, and poured forth her passionate soul as Andromache at the tomb of Hector, etc. I question whether any Turk, of all that ever entered the paradise of opium-eaters, can have had half the pleasure I had. But, indeed, I honour the Barbarians too much by supposing them capable of any pleasures approaching to the intellectual ones of an Englishman. For music is an intellectual

or a sensual pleasure, according to the temperament of him who hears it. And, by the by, with the exception of the fine extravaganza on that subject in *Twelfth Night*, I do not recollect more than one thing said adequately on the subject of music in all literature : it is a passage in the *Religio Medici* of Sir T. Brown ; and, though chiefly remarkable for its sublimity, has also a philosophic value, inasmuch as it points to the true theory of musical effects. The mistake of most people is to suppose that it is by the ear they communicate with music, and, therefore, that they are purely passive to its effects. But this is not so : it is by the reaction of the mind upon the notices of the ear, (the *matter* coming by the senses, the *form* from the mind,) that the pleasure is constructed : and therefore it is that people of equally good ear differ so much in this point from one another. Now opium, by greatly increasing the activity of the mind generally, increases, of necessity, that particular mode of its activity by which we are able to construct out of the raw material of organic sound an elaborate intellectual pleasure. But, says a friend, a succession of musical sounds is to me like a collection of Arabic characters : I can attach no ideas to them. Ideas ! my good sir ? there is no occasion for them : all that

class of ideas which can be available in such a case has a language of representative feelings. But this is a subject foreign to my present purposes : it is sufficient to say, that a chorus, etc. of elaborate harmony, displayed before me, as in a piece of arras work, the whole of my past life—not as if recalled by an act of memory, but as if present and incarnated in the music : no longer painful to dwell upon : but the detail of its incidents removed, or blended in some hazy abstraction ; and its passions exalted, spiritualized, and sublimed. All this was to be had for five shillings. And over and above the music of the stage and the orchestra, I had all around me, in the intervals of the performance, the music of the Italian language talked by Italian women : for the gallery was usually crowded with Italians : and I listened with a pleasure such as that with which Weld the traveller lay and listened, in Canada, to the sweet laughter of Indian women ; for the less you understand of a language the more sensible you are to the melody or harshness of its sounds : for such a purpose, therefore, it was an advantage to me that I was a poor Italian scholar, reading it but little, and not speaking it at all, nor understanding a tenth part of what I heard spoken.

These were my Opera pleasures : but another

pleasure I had which, as it could be had only on a Saturday night, occasionally struggled with my love of the Opera ; for, at that time, Tuesday and Saturday were the regular Opera nights. On this subject I am afraid I shall be rather obscure, but, I can assure the reader, not at all more so than Marinus in his life of Proclus, or many other biographers and autobiographers of fair reputation. This pleasure, I have said, was to be had only on a Saturday night. What then was Saturday night to me more than any other night? I had no labours that I rested from ; no wages to receive : what needed I to care for Saturday night, more than as it was a summons to hear Grassini ? True, most logical reader : what you say is unanswerable. And yet so it was and is, that, whereas different men throw their feelings into different channels, and most are apt to show their interest in the concerns of the poor, chiefly by sympathy, expressed in some shape or other, with their distresses and sorrows, I, at that time, was disposed to express my interest by sympathising with their pleasures. The pains of poverty I had lately seen too much of ; more than I wished to remember : but the pleasures of the poor, their consolations of spirit, and their repose from bodily toil, can never become oppres-

sive to contemplate. Now Saturday night is the season for the chief, regular, and periodic return of rest to the poor : in this point the most hostile sects unite, and acknowledge a common link of brotherhood : almost all Christendom rests from its labours. It is a rest introductory to another rest : and divided by a whole day and two nights from the renewal of toil. On this account I feel always, on a Saturday night, as though I also were released from some yoke of labour, had some wages to receive, and some luxury of repose to enjoy. For the sake, therefore, of witnessing, upon as large a scale as possible, a spectacle with which my sympathy was so entire, I used often, on Saturday nights, after I had taken opium, to wander forth, without much regarding the direction or the distance, to all the markets and other parts of London to which the poor resort on a Saturday night for laying out their wages. Many a family party, consisting of a man, his wife, and sometimes one or two of his children, have I listened to, as they stood consulting on their ways and means, or the strength of their exchequer, or the price of household articles. Gradually I became familiar with their wishes, their difficulties, and their opinions. Sometimes there might be heard murmurs of discontent :

but far oftener expressions on the countenance, or uttered in words, of patience, hope, and tranquillity. And taken generally, I must say, that, in this point at least, the poor are far more philosophic than the rich—that they show a more ready and cheerful submission to what they consider as irremediable evils, or irreparable losses. Whenever I saw occasion, or could do it without appearing to be intrusive, I joined their parties; and gave my opinion upon the matter in discussion, which, if not always judicious, was always received indulgently. If wages were a little higher, or expected to be so, or the quartern loaf a little lower, or it was reported that onions and butter were expected to fall, I was glad: yet, if the contrary were true, I drew from opium some means of consoling myself. For opium, like the bee, that extracts its materials indiscriminately from roses and from the soot of chimneys, can overrule all feelings into a compliance with the master key. Some of these rambles led me to great distances: for an opium-eater is too happy to observe the motion of time. And sometimes in my attempts to steer homewards upon nautical principles, by fixing my eye on the pole-star, and seeking ambitiously for a north-west passage, instead of circumnavigating all the

capcs and headlands I had doubled in my outward voyage, I came suddenly upon such knotty problems of alleys, such enigmatical entries, and such sphinx's riddles of streets without thoroughfares, as must, I conceive, baffle the audacity of porters, and confound the intellects of hackney-coachmen. I could almost have believed, at times, that I must be the first discoverer of some of these *terra incognita*, and doubted whether they had yet been laid down in the modern charts of London. For all this, however, I paid a heavy price in distant years, when the human face tyrannized over my dreams, and the perplexities of my steps in London came back and haunted my sleep with the feeling of perplexities moral or intellectual, that brought confusion to the reason, or anguish and remorse to the conscience.

Thus I have shown that opium does not, of necessity, produce inactivity or torpor ; but that, on the contrary, it often led me into markets and theatres. Yet, in candour, I will admit that markets and theatres are not the appropriate haunts of the opium-eater, when in the divinest state incident to his enjoyment. In that state, crowds become an oppression to him ; music even, too sensual and gross. He naturally seeks solitude and silence, as indis-

pensable conditions of those trances and profoundest reveries which are the crown or consummation of what opium can do for human nature. I, whose disease it was to meditate too much, and to observe too little, and who upon my first entrance at college was nearly falling into a deep melancholy from brooding too much on the sufferings which I had witnessed in London, was sufficiently aware of the tendencies of my own thoughts to do all I could to counteract them.—I was, indeed, like a person who, according to the old legend, had entered the cave of Trophonius: and the remedies I sought were to force myself into society, and to keep my understanding in continual activity upon matters of science. But for these remedies, I should certainly have become hypochondriacally melancholy. In after years, however, when my cheerfulness was more fully re-established, I yielded to my natural inclination for a solitary life. And, at that time, I often fell into these reveries upon taking opium; and more than once it has happened to me, on a summer night, when I have been at an open window, in a room from which I could overlook the sea at a mile below me, and could command a view of the great town of L[iverpool], at about the same distance, that I have sat, from sun-set to sun-rise, motionless, and without wishing to move.

I shall be charged with mysticism, Behmenism, quietism, etc. but *that* shall not alarm me. Sir H. Vane, the younger, was one of our wisest men : and let my readers see if he, in his philosophical works, be half as unmystical as I am. —I say, then, that it has often struck me that the scene itself was somewhat typical of what took place in such a reverie. The town of L[iverpool] represented the earth, with its sorrows and its graves left behind, yet not out of sight, nor wholly forgotten. The ocean, in everlasting but gentle agitation, and brooded over by a dove-like calm, might not unfitly typify the mind and the mood which then swayed it. For it seemed to me as if then first I stood at a distance, and aloof from the uproar of life ; as if the tumult, the fever, and the strife, were suspended ; a respite granted from the secret burthens of the heart ; a sabbath of repose ; a resting from human labours. Here were the hopes which blossom in the paths of life, reconciled with the peace which is in the grave ; motions of the intellect as unwearied as the heavens, yet for all anxieties a halcyon calm : a tranquillity that seemed no product of inertia, but as if resulting from mighty and equal antagonisms ; infinite activities, infinite repose.

Oh ! just, subtle, and mighty opium ! that to the hearts of poor and rich alike, for the wounds

that will never heal, and for "the pangs that tempt the spirit to rebel," bringest an assuaging balm; eloquent opium! that with thy potent rhetoric stealest away the purposes of wrath; and to the guilty man for one night givest back the hopes of his youth, and hands washed pure from blood; and to the proud man a brief oblivion for

Wrongs unredress'd and insults unavenged;

that summonest to the chancery of dreams, for the triumphs of suffering innocence, false witnesses; and confoundest perjury; and dost reverse the sentences of unrighteous judges:—thou buildest upon the bosom of darkness, out of the fantastic imagery of the brain, cities and temples beyond the art of Phidias and Praxiteles—beyond the splendour of Babylon and Hekatompylos: and "from the anarchy of dreaming sleep," callest into sunny light the faces of long-buried beauties, and the blessed household countenances, cleansed from the "dishonours of the grave." Thou only givest these gifts to man; and thou hast the keys of Paradise, oh, just, subtle, and mighty opium!

INTRODUCTION TO THE PAINS OF
OPIUM.

Courteous, and, I hope, indulgent reader—for all *my* readers must be indulgent ones, or else, I fear, I shall shock them too much to count on their courtesy—having accompanied me thus far, now let me request you to move onwards for about eight years ; that is to say, from 1804, when I have said that my acquaintance with opium first began, to 1812. The years of academic life are now over and gone—almost forgotten :—the student's cap no longer presses my temples ; if my cap exist at all, it presses those of some youthful scholar, I trust, as happy as myself, and as passionate a lover of knowledge. My gown is, by this time, I dare to say, in the same condition with many thousands of excellent books in the Bodleian, viz. diligently perused by certain studious moths and worms : or departed, however, which is all that I know of its fate, to that great reservoir of *somewhere*, to which all the tea-cups, tea-caddies, tea-pots, tea-kettles, etc. have departed (not to speak of still frailer vessels, such as glasses, decanters, bed-makers, etc.) which occasional resemblances

in the present generation of tea-cups, etc. remind me of having once possessed, but of whose departure and final fate I, in common with most gownsmen of either university, could give, I suspect, but an obscure and conjectural history. The persecution of the chapel-bell, sounding its unwelcome summons to six o'clock matins, interrupts my slumbers no longer: the porter who rang it, upon whose beautiful nose (bronze, inlaid with copper) I wrote, in retaliation, so many Greek epigrams whilst I was dressing, is dead, and has ceased to disturb any body: and I and many others who suffered much from his tintinnabulous propensities, have now agreed to overlook his errors, and have forgiven him. Even with the bell I am now in charity: it rings, I suppose, as formerly, thrice a-day: and cruelly annoys, I doubt not, many worthy gentlemen, and disturbs their peace of mind: but as to me, in this year 1812, I regard its treacherous voice no longer—treacherous, I call it, for, by some refinement of malice, it spoke in as sweet and silvery tones as if it had been inviting one to a party—its tones have no longer, indeed, power to reach me, let the wind sit as favourable as the malice of the bell itself could wish: for I am two hundred and fifty miles away from it, and buried in the depth of

mountains. And what am I doing amongst the mountains? Taking opium. Yes, but what else? Why, reader, in 1812, the year we are now arrived at, as well as for some years previous, I have been chiefly studying German metaphysics, in the writings of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, etc. And how, and in what manner, do I live? in short, what class or description of men do I belong to? I am at this period, viz. in 1812, living in a cottage; and with a single female servant (*honi soit qui mal y pense*), who, amongst my neighbours, passes by the name of my "housekeeper." And, as a scholar and a man of learned education, and in that sense a gentleman, I may presume to class myself as an unworthy member of that indefinite body called *gentlemen*. Partly on the ground I have assigned, perhaps; partly because, from my having no visible calling or business, it is rightly judged that I must be living on my private fortune; I am so classed by my neighbours: and, by the courtesy of modern England, I am usually addressed on letters, etc. *esquire*, though having, I fear, in the rigorous construction of heralds, but slender pretensions to that distinguished honour: yes, in popular estimation, I am X. Y. Z., *esquire*, but not Justice of the Peace, nor Custos Rotulorum. Am I married?

Not yet. And I still take opium? On Saturday nights. And, perhaps, have taken it unblushingly ever since "the rainy Sunday," and "the stately Pantheon," and "the beatific druggist" of 1804?—Even so. And how do I find my health after all this opium-eating? in short, how do I do? Why, pretty well, I thank you, reader: in the phrase of ladies in the straw, "as well as can be expected." In fact, if I dared to say the real and simple truth, though, to satisfy the theories of medical men, I *ought* to be ill, I never was better in my life than in the spring of 1812; and I hope sincerely, that the quantity of claret, port, or "particular Madeira," which, in all probability, you, good reader, have taken, and design to take, for every term of eight years, during your natural life, may as little disorder your health as mine was disordered by the opium I had taken for the eight years between 1804 and 1812. Hence you may see again the danger of taking any medical advice from *Anastasius*; in divinity, for aught I know, or law, he may be a safe counsellor; but not in medicine. No: it is far better to consult Dr. Buchan; as I did: for I never forgot that worthy man's excellent suggestion: and I was "particularly careful not to take above five-and-twenty ounces of laudanum." To this

moderation and temperate use of the article, I may ascribe it, I suppose, that as yet, at least, (*i.e.* in 1812,) I am ignorant and unsuspecting of the avenging terrors which opium has in store for those who abuse its lenity. At the same time, it must not be forgotten, that hitherto I have been only a dilettante eater of opium : eight years' practice even, with the single precaution of allowing sufficient intervals between every indulgence, has not been sufficient to make opium necessary to me as a article of daily diet. But now comes a different era. Move on, if you please, reader, to 1813. In the summer of the year we have just quitted, I had suffered much in bodily health from distress of mind connected with a very melancholy event. This event, being no ways related to the subject now before me, further than through the bodily illness which it produced, I need not more particularly notice. Whether this illness of 1812 had any share in that of 1813, I know not : but so it was, that in the latter year I was attacked by a most appalling irritation of the stomach, in all respects the same as that which had caused me so much suffering in youth, and accompanied by a revival of all the old dreams. This is the point of my narrative on which, as respects my own self - justification, the whole of what

follows may be said to hinge. And here I find myself in a perplexing dilemma:—Either, on the one hand, I must exhaust the reader's patience, by such a detail of my malady, and of my struggles with it, as might suffice to establish the fact of my inability to wrestle any longer with irritation and constant suffering: or, on the other hand, by passing lightly over this critical part of my story, I must forego the benefit of a stronger impression left on the mind of the reader, and must lay myself open to the misconception of having slipped by the easy and gradual steps of self-indulging persons, from the first to the final stage of opium-eating, a misconception to which there will be a lurking predisposition in most readers, from my previous acknowledgments. This is the dilemma: the first horn of which would be sufficient to toss and gore any column of patient readers, though drawn up sixteen deep and constantly relieved by fresh men: consequently *that* is not to be thought of. It remains then, that I *postulate* so much as is necessary for my purpose. And let me take as full credit for what I postulate as if I had demonstrated it, good reader, at the expense of your patience and my own. Be not so ungenerous as to let me suffer in your good opinion through my own forbearance and regard for

your comfort. No: believe all that I ask of you, viz. that I could resist no longer; believe it liberally, and as an act of grace: or else in mere prudence: for, if not, then in the next edition of my Opium Confessions revised and enlarged, I will make you believe and tremble: and *à force d'ennuyer*, by mere dint of pandiculation I will terrify all readers of mine from ever again questioning any postulate that I shall think fit to make.

This then, let me repeat, I postulate—that, at the time I began to take opium daily, I could not have done otherwise. Whether, indeed, afterwards I might not have succeeded in breaking off the habit, even when it seemed to me that all efforts would be unavailing, and whether many of the innumerable efforts which I *did* make might not have been carried much further, and my gradual re-conquests of ground lost might not have been followed up much more energetically—these are questions which I must decline. Perhaps I might make out a case of palliation; but, shall I speak ingenuously? I confess it, as a besetting infirmity of mine, that I am too much of an Eudæmonist: I hanker too much after a state of happiness, both for myself and others: I cannot face misery, whether my own or not, with an eye of sufficient firmness: and am little capable of encountering present pain

for the sake of any reversionary benefit. On some other matters, I can agree with the gentlemen in the cotton-trade at Manchester in affecting the Stoic philosophy: but not in this. Here I take the liberty of an Eclectic philosopher, and I look out for some courteous and considerate sect that will condescend more to the infirm condition of an opium-eater; that are 'sweet men,' as Chaucer says, 'to give absolution,' and will show some conscience in the penances they inflict, and the efforts of abstinence they exact from poor sinners like myself. An inhuman moralist I can no more endure in my nervous state than opium that has not been boiled. At any rate, he, who summons me to send out a large freight of self-denial and mortification upon any cruising voyage of moral improvement, must make it clear to my understanding that the concern is a hopeful one. At my time of life (six and thirty years of age) it cannot be supposed that I have much energy to spare: in fact, I find it all little enough for the intellectual labours I have on my hands: and, therefore, let no man expect to frighten me by a few hard words into embarking any part of it upon desperate adventures of morality.

Whether desperate or not, however, the issue of the struggle in 1813 was what I have men-

tioned ; and from this date, the reader is to consider me as a regular and confirmed opium-eater, of whom to ask whether on any particular day he had or had not taken opium, would be to ask whether his lungs had performed respiration, or the heart fulfilled its functions.—You understand now, reader, what I am : and you are by this time aware, that no old gentleman, “with a snow-white beard,” will have any chance of persuading me to surrender “the little golden receptacle of the pernicious drug.” No : I give notice to all, whether moralists or surgeons, that, whatever be their pretensions and skill in their respective lines of practice, they must not hope for any countenance from me, if they think to begin by any savage proposition for a Lent or Ramadan of abstinence from opium. This then being all fully understood between us, we shall in future sail before the wind. Now then, reader, from 1813, where all this time we have been sitting down and loitering—rise up, if you please, and walk forward about three years more. Now draw up the curtain, and you shall see me in a new character.

If any man, poor or rich, were to say that he would tell us what had been the happiest day in his life, and the why, and the wherefore, I suppose that we should all cry out—Hear him !

Hear him !—As to the happiest *day*, that must be very difficult for any wise man to name : because any event, that could occupy so distinguished a place in a man's retrospect of his life, or be entitled to have shed a special felicity on any one day, ought to be of such an enduring character, as that, accidents apart, it should have continued to shed the same felicity, or one not distinguishably less, on many years together. To the happiest *instrum*, however, or even to the happiest *year*, it may be allowed to any man to point without discountenance from wisdom. This year, in my case, reader, was the one which we have now reached ; though it stood, I confess, as a parenthesis between years of a gloomier character. It was a year of brilliant water, to speak after the manner of jewellers, set as it were, and insulated, in the gloom and cloudy melancholy of opium. Strange as it may sound, I had a little before this time descended suddenly, and without any considerable effort, from 320 grains of opium (*i.e.* eight thousand drops of laudanum) per day, to forty grains, or one eighth part. Instantaneously, and as if by magic, the cloud of profoundest melancholy which rested upon my brain, like some black vapours that I have seen roll away from the summits of mountains, drew off in one day

(*νυχθημερον*); passed off with its murky banners as simultaneously as a ship that has been stranded, and is floated off by a spring tide—

That moveth altogether, if it move at all.

Now, then, I was again happy : I now took only 1000 drops of laudanum per day : and what was that ? A latter spring had come to close up the season of youth : my brain performed its functions as healthily as ever before : I read Kant again ; and again I understood him, or fancied that I did. Again my feelings of pleasure expanded themselves to all around me : and if any man from Oxford or Cambridge, or from neither, had been announced to me in my unpretending cottage, I should have welcomed him with as sumptuous a reception as so poor a man could offer. Whatever else was wanting to a wise man's happiness,—of laudanum I would have given him as much as he wished, and in a golden cup. And, by the way, now that I speak of giving laudanum away, I remember, about this time, a little incident, which I mention, because, trifling as it was, the reader will soon meet it again in my dreams, which it influenced more fearfully than could be imagined. One day a Malay knocked at my door. What business a Malay could have to transact amongst

English mountains, I cannot conjecture: but possibly he was on his road to a sea-port about forty miles distant.

The servant who opened the door to him was a young girl born and bred amongst the mountains, who had never seen an Asiatic dress of any sort: his turban, therefore, confounded her not a little: and, as it turned out that his attainments in English were exactly of the same extent as hers in the Malay, there seemed to be an impassable gulf fixed between all communication of ideas, if either party had happened to possess any. In this dilemma, the girl, recollecting the reputed learning of her master, and doubtless giving me credit for a knowledge of all the languages of the earth, besides, perhaps, a few of the lunar ones, came and gave me to understand that there was a sort of demon below, whom she clearly imagined that my art could exorcise from the house. I did not immediately go down: but, when I did, the group which presented itself, arranged as it was by accident, though not very elaborate, took hold of my fancy and my eye in a way that none of the statuesque attitudes exhibited in the ballets at the Opera House, though so ostentatiously complex, had ever done. In a cottage kitchen, but panelled on the wall with dark wood that from age and

rubbing resembled oak, and looking more like a rustic hall of entrance than a kitchen, stood the Malay—his turban and loose trowsers of dingy white relieved upon the dark panelling : he had placed himself nearer to the girl than she seemed to relish ; though her native spirit of mountain intrepidity contended with the feeling of simple awe which her countenance expressed as she gazed upon the tiger-cat before her. And a more striking picture there could not be imagined, than the beautiful English face of the girl, and its exquisite fairness, together with her erect and independent attitude, contrasted with the sallow and bilious skin of the Malay, enamelled or veneered with mahogany, by marine air, his small, fierce, restless eyes, thin lips, slavish gestures and adorations. Half-hidden by the ferocious looking Malay was a little child from a neighbouring cottage who had crept in after him, and was now in the act of reverting its head, and gazing upwards at the turban and the fiery eyes beneath it, whilst with one hand he caught at the dress of the young woman for protection. My knowledge of the Oriental tongues is not remarkably extensive, being indeed confined to two words—the Arabic word for barley, and the Turkish for opium (madjoon), which I have learnt from Anastasius.

And, as I had neither a Malay dictionary, nor even Adelung's *Mithridates*, which might have helped me to a few words, I addressed him in some lines from the *Iliad* ; considering that, of such languages as I possessed, Greek, in point of longitude, came geographically nearest to an Oriental one. He worshipped me in a most devout manner, and replied in what I suppose was Malay. In this way I saved my reputation with my neighbours : for the Malay had no means of betraying the secret. He lay down upon the floor for about an hour, and then pursued his journey. On his departure, I presented him with a piece of opium. To him, as an Orientalist, I concluded that opium must be familiar : and the expression of his face convinced me that it was. Nevertheless, I was struck with some little consternation when I saw him suddenly raise his hand to his mouth, and, in the school-boy phrase, bolt the whole, divided into three pieces, at one mouthful. The quantity was enough to kill three dragoons and their horses : and I felt some alarm for the poor creature : but what could be done ? I had given him the opium in compassion for his solitary life, on recollecting that if he had travelled on foot from London it must be nearly three weeks since he could have exchanged a thought with

any human being. I could not think of violating the laws of hospitality by having him seized and drenched with an emetic, and thus frightening him into a notion that we were going to sacrifice him to some English idol. No : there was clearly no help for it :—he took his leave : and for some days I felt anxious : but as I never heard of any Malay being found dead, I became convinced that he was used to opium : and that I must have done him the service I designed, by giving him one night of respite from the pains of wandering.

This incident I have digressed to mention, because this Malay, partly from the picturesque exhibition he assisted to frame, partly from the anxiety I connected with his image for some days, fastened afterwards upon my dreams, and brought other Malays with him worse than himself, that ran “a-muck” at me, and led me into a world of troubles.—But to quit this episode, and to return to my intercalary year of happiness. I have said already, that on a subject so important to us all as happiness, we should listen with pleasure to any man’s experience or experiments, even though he were but a plough-boy, who cannot be supposed to have ploughed very deep into such an intractable soil as that of human pains and pleasures, or to have conducted

his researches upon any very enlightened principles. But I, who have taken happiness, both in a solid and a liquid shape, both boiled and un-boiled, both East India and Turkey—who have conducted my experiments upon this interesting subject with a sort of galvanic battery—and have, for the general benefit of the world, inoculated myself, as it were, with the poison of 8000 drops of laudanum per day, just for the same reason as a French surgeon inoculated himself lately with cancer—an English one, twenty years ago, with plague—and a third, I know not of what nation, with hydrophobia),—I, it will be admitted, must surely know what happiness is, if any body does. And, therefore, I will here lay down an analysis of happiness ; and as the most interesting mode of communicating it, I will give it, not didactically, but wrapt up and involved in a picture of one evening, as I spent every evening during the intercalary year when laudanum, though taken daily, was to me no more than the elixir of pleasure. This done, I shall quit the subject of happiness altogether, and pass to a very different one—the *pains of opium*.

Let there be a cottage, standing in a valley, eighteen miles from any town—no spacious valley, but about two miles long, by three quarters of a mile in average width ; the benefit of which pro-

vision is that all the families resident within its circuit will compose, as it were, one larger household personally familiar to your eye, and more or less interesting to your affections. Let the mountains be real mountains, between three and four thousand feet high ; and the cottage, a real cottage ; not, as a witty author has it, "a cottage with a double coach-house : " let it be, in fact—for I must abide by the actual scene—a white cottage, embowered with flowering shrubs, so chosen as to unfold a succession of flowers upon the walls, and clustering round the windows through all the months of spring, summer, and autumn—beginning, in fact, with May roses, and ending with jasmine. Let it, however, *not* be spring, nor summer, nor autumn—but winter, in his sternest shape. This is a most important point in the science of happiness. And I am surprised to see people overlook it, and think it matter of congratulation that winter is going ; or, if coming, is not likely to be a severe one. On the contrary, I put up a petition annually for as much snow, hail, frost, or storm, of one kind or other, as the skies can possibly afford us. Surely every body is aware of the divine pleasures which attend a winter fire-side : candles at four o'clock, warm hearth-rugs, tea, a fair tea-maker, shutters closed, curtains flowing

in ample draperies on the floor, whilst the wind
and rain are raging audibly without,

And at the doors and windows seem to call,
As heav'n and earth they would together mell ;
Yet the least entrance find they none at all ;
Whence sweeter grows our rest secure in massy hall.

Castle of Indolence.

All these are items in the description of a winter evening, which must surely be familiar to everybody born in a high latitude. And it is evident, that most of these delicacies, like ice-cream, require a very low temperature of the atmosphere to produce them : they are fruits which cannot be ripened without weather stormy or inclement, in some way or other. I am not "*particular*," as people say, whether it be snow, or black frost, or wind so strong, that (as Mr. — says) "you may lean your back against it like a post." I can put up even with rain, provided it rains cats and dogs : but something of the sort I must have : and, if I have it not, I think myself in a manner ill-used : for why am I called on to pay so heavily for winter, in coals, and candles, and various privations that will occur even to gentlemen, if I am not to have the article good of its kind? No : a Canadian winter for my money : or a Russian one, where

every man is but a co-proprietor with the north wind in the fee-simple of his own ears. Indeed, so great an epicure am I in this matter, that I cannot relish a winter night fully if it be much past St. Thomas's day, and have degenerated into disgusting tendencies to vernal appearances: no: it must be divided by a thick wall of dark nights from all return of light and sunshine.—From the latter weeks of October to Christmas-eve, therefore, is the period during which happiness is in season, which, in my judgment, enters the room with the tea-tray: for tea, though ridiculed by those who are naturally of coarse nerves, or are become so from wine-drinking, and are not susceptible of influence from so refined a stimulant, will always be the favourite beverage of the intellectual: and, for my part, I would have joined Dr. Johnson in a *bellum internecinum* against Jonas Hanway, or any other impious person who should presume to disparage it.—But here, to save myself the trouble of too much verbal description, I will introduce a painter; and give him directions for the rest of the picture. Painters do not like white cottages, unless a good deal weather-stained: but as the reader now understands that it is a winter night, his services will not be required, except for the inside of the house.

Paint me, then, a room seventeen feet by twelve, and not more than seven and a half feet high. This, reader, is somewhat ambitiously styled, in my family, the drawing-room: but, being contrived "a double debt to pay," it is also, and more justly, termed the library; for it happens that books are the only article of property in which I am richer than my neighbours. Of these, I have about five thousand, collected gradually since my eighteenth year. Therefore, painter, put as many as you can into this room. Make it populous with books: and, furthermore, paint me a good fire; and furniture, plain and modest, befitting the unpretending cottage of a scholar. And, near the fire, paint me a tea-table; and, as it is clear that no creature can come to see one such a stormy night, place only two cups and saucers on the tea-tray: and, if you know how to paint such a thing symbolically, or otherwise, paint me an eternal tea-pot—eternal *à parte ante*, and *à parte post*; for I usually drink tea from eight o'clock at night to four o'clock in the morning. And, as it is very unpleasant to make tea, or to pour it out for oneself, paint me a lovely young woman, sitting at the table. Paint her arms like Aurora's, and her smiles like Hebe's:—But no, dear M—[Margaret], not even in jest let me insinuate that thy power

to illuminate my cottage rests upon a tenure so perishable as mere personal beauty ; or that the witchcraft of angelic smiles lies within the empire of any earthly pencil. Pass, then, my good painter, to something more within its power : and the next article brought forward should naturally be myself—a picture of the Opium-eater with his “little golden receptacle of the pernicious drug,” lying beside him on the table. As to the opium, I have no objection to see a picture of *that*, though I would rather see the original : you may paint it, if you choose ; but I apprise you, that no “little” receptacle would, even in 1816, answer *my* purpose, who was at a distance from the “stately Pantheon,” and all druggists (mortal or otherwise). No : you may as well paint the real receptacle, which was not of gold, but of glass, and as much like a wine-decanter as possible. Into this you may put a quart of ruby-coloured laudanum : that, and a book of German metaphysics placed by its side, will sufficiently attest my being in the neighbourhood ; but, as to myself,—there I demur. I admit that, naturally, I ought to occupy the foreground of the picture ; that being the hero of the piece, or (if you choose) the criminal at the bar, my body should be had into court. This seems reasonable : but why

should I confess, on this point, to a painter? or why confess at all? If the public (into whose private ear I am confidentially whispering my confessions, and not into any painter's) should chance to have framed some agreeable picture for itself, of the Opium-eater's exterior,—should have ascribed to him, romantically, an elegant person, or a handsome face, why should I barbarously tear from it so pleasing a delusion—pleasing both to the public and to me? No: paint me, if at all, according to your own fancy; and, as a painter's fancy should teem with beautiful creations, I cannot fail, in that way, to be a gainer. And now, reader, we have run through all the ten categories of my condition, as it stood about 1816-17: up to the middle of which latter year I judge myself to have been a happy man: and the elements of that happiness I have endeavoured to place before you, in the above sketch of the interior of a scholar's library, in a cottage among the mountains, on a stormy winter evening.

But now farewell—a long farewell to happiness—winter or summer! farewell to smiles and laughter! farewell to peace of mind! farewell to hope and to tranquil dreams, and to the blessed consolations of sleep! for more than three years and a half I am summoned away

from these : I am now arrived at an Iliad of woes : for I have now to record

THE PAINS OF OPIUM.

—— as when some great painter dips
His pencil in the gloom of earthquake and eclipse.
Shelley's Revolt of Islam.

Readers, who have thus far accompanied me, I must request your attention to a brief explanatory note on three points :

1. For several reasons, I have not been able to compose the notes for this part of my narrative into any regular and connected shape. I give the notes disjointed as I find them, or have now drawn them up from memory. Some of them point to their own date ; some I have dated ; and some are undated. Whenever it could answer my purpose to transplant them from the natural or chronological order, I have not scrupled to do so. Sometimes I speak in the present, sometimes in the past tense. Few of the notes, perhaps, were written exactly at the period of time to which they relate ; but this can little affect their accuracy ; as the impressions were such that they can never fade from my mind. Much has been omitted. I could not, without effort, constrain myself to

the task of either recalling, or constructing into a regular narrative, the whole burthen of horrors which lies upon my brain. This feeling partly I plead in excuse, and partly that I am now in London, and am a helpless sort of person, who cannot even arrange his own papers without assistance ; and I am separated from the hands which are wont to perform for me the offices of an amanuensis.

2. You will think, perhaps, that I am too confidential and communicative of my own private history. It may be so. But my way of writing is rather to think aloud, and follow my own humours, than much to consider who is listening to me ; and, if I stop to consider what is proper to be said to this or that person, I shall soon come to doubt whether any part at all is proper. The fact is, I place myself at a distance of fifteen or twenty years ahead of this time, and suppose myself writing to those who will be interested about me hereafter ; and wishing to have some record of a time, the entire history of which no one can know but myself, I do it as fully as I am able with the efforts I am now capable of making, because I know not whether I can ever find time to do it again.

3. It will occur to you often to ask, why did I

not release myself from the horrors of opium, by leaving it off, or diminishing it? To this I must answer briefly: it might be supposed that I yielded to the fascinations of opium too easily; it cannot be supposed that any man can be charmed by its terrors. The reader may be sure, therefore, that I made attempts innumerable to reduce the quantity. I add, that those who witnessed the agonies of those attempts, and not myself, were the first to beg me to desist. But could not I have reduced it a drop a day, or by adding water, have bisected or trisected a drop? A thousand drops bisected would thus have taken nearly six years to reduce; and that way would certainly not have answered. But this is a common mistake of those who know nothing of opium experimentally; I appeal to those who do, whether it is not always found that down to a certain point it can be reduced with ease and even pleasure, but that, after that point, further reduction causes intense suffering. Yes, say many thoughtless persons, who know not what they are talking of, you will suffer a little low spirits and dejection for a few days. I answer, no; there is nothing like low spirits; on the contrary, the mere animal spirits are uncommonly raised: the pulse is improved: the health is better. It is not there that the

suffering lies. It has no resemblance to the sufferings caused by renouncing wine. It is a state of unutterable irritation of stomach (which surely is not much like dejection), accompanied by intense perspirations, and feelings such as I shall not attempt to describe without more space at my command.

I shall now enter "*in medias res*," and shall anticipate, from a time when my opium pains might be said to be at their *acme*, an account of their palsying effects on the intellectual faculties.

My studies have now been long interrupted. I cannot read to myself with any pleasure, hardly with a moment's endurance. Yet I read aloud sometimes for the pleasure of others; because, reading is an accomplishment of mine; and, in the slang use of the word *accomplishment* as a superficial and ornamental attainment, almost the only one I possess: and formerly, if I had any vanity at all connected with any endowment or attainment of mine, it was with this; for I had observed that no accomplishment was so rare. Players are the worst readers of all: John Kemble reads vilely: and Mrs. Siddons, who is so celebrated, can read

nothing well but dramatic compositions : Milton she cannot read sufferably. People in general either read poetry without any passion at all, or else overstep the modesty of nature, and read not like scholars. Of late, if I have felt moved by anything in books, it has been by the grand lamentations of Samson Agonistes, or the great harmonies of the Satanic speeches in Paradise Regained, when read aloud by myself. A young lady sometimes comes and drinks tea with us : at her request and M{argaret}'s I now and then read Wordsworth's poems to them. (Wordsworth, by the by, is the only poet I ever met who could read his own verses : often indeed he reads admirably.)

For nearly two years I believe that I read no book but one : and I owe it to the author, in discharge of a great debt of gratitude, to mention what that was. The sublimer and more passionate poets I still read, as I have said, by snatches, and occasionally. But my proper vocation, as I well knew, was the exercise of the analytic understanding. Now, for the most part, analytic studies are continuous, and not to be pursued by fits and starts, or fragmentary efforts. Mathematics, for instance, intellectual philosophy, etc. were all become insupportable to me ; I shrunk from them with a sense of

powerless and infantine feebleness that gave me an anguish the greater from remembering the time when I grappled with them to my own hourly delight ; and for this further reason, because I had devoted the labour of my whole life, and had dedicated my intellect, blossoms and fruits, to the slow and elaborate toil of constructing one single work, to which I had presumed to give the title of an unfinished work of Spinoza's ; viz. *De emendatione humani intellectus*. This was now lying locked up, as by frost, like any Spanish bridge or aqueduct, begun upon too great a scale for the resources of the architect ; and, instead of surviving me as a monument of wishes at least, and aspirations, and a life of labour dedicated to the exaltation of human nature in that way in which God had best fitted me to promote so great an object, it was likely to stand a memorial to my children of hopes defeated, of baffled efforts, of materials uselessly accumulated, of foundations laid that were never to support a superstructure, —of the grief and the ruin of the architect. In this state of imbecility, I had, for amusement, turned my attention to political economy ; my understanding, which formerly had been as active and restless as a hyena, could not, I suppose (so long as I lived at all) sink into

utter lethargy ; and political economy offers this advantage to a person in my state, that though it is eminently an organic science (no part, that is to say, but what acts on the whole, as the whole again reacts on each part), yet the several parts may be detached and contemplated singly. Great as was the prostration of my powers at this time, yet I could not forget my knowledge ; and my understanding had been for too many years intimate with severe thinkers, with logic, and the great masters of knowledge, not to be aware of the utter feebleness of the main herd of modern economists. I had been led in 1811 to look into loads of books and pamphlets on many branches of economy ; and, at my desire, M[argaret] sometimes read to me chapters from more recent works, or parts of parliamentary debates. I saw that these were generally the very dregs and rinsings of the human intellect ; and that any man of sound head, and practised in wielding logic with a scholastic adroitness, might take up the whole academy of modern economists, and throttle them between heaven and earth with his finger and thumb, or bray their fungus heads to powder with a lady's fan. At length, in 1819, a friend in Edinburgh sent me down Mr. Ricardo's book : and recurring to my own prophetic anticipation of the advent of

some legislator for this science, I said, before I had finished the first chapter, "Thou art the man!" Wonder and curiosity were emotions that had long been dead in me. Yet I wondered once more : I wondered at myself that I could once again be stimulated to the effort of reading : and much more I wondered at the book. Had this profound work been really written in England during the nineteenth century? Was it possible? I supposed thinking had been extinct in England. Could it be that an Englishman, and he not in academic bowers, but oppressed by mercantile and senatorial cares, had accomplished what all the universities of Europe, and a century of thought, had failed even to advance by one hair's breadth? All other writers had been crushed and overlaid by the enormous weight of facts and documents ; Mr. Ricardo had deduced, *a priori*, from the understanding itself, laws which first gave a ray of light into the unwieldy chaos of materials, and had constructed what had been but a collection of tentative discussions into a science of regular proportions, now first standing on an eternal basis.

Thus did one single work of a profound understanding avail to give me a pleasure and an activity which I had not known for years :—

it roused me even to write, or, at least, to dictate what M[argaret] wrote for me. It seemed to me that some important truths had escaped even "the inevitable eye" of Mr. Ricardo : and, as these were, for the most part, of such a nature that I could express or illustrate them more briefly and elegantly by algebraic symbols than in the usual clumsy and loitering diction of economists, the whole would not have filled a pocket-book ; and being so brief, with M[argaret] for my amanuensis, even at this time, incapable as I was of all general exertion, I drew up my *Prolegomena to all future Systems of Political Economy*. I hope it will not be found redolent of opium ; though, indeed, to most people, the subject itself is a sufficient opiate.

This exertion, however, was but a temporary flash ; as the sequel showed—for I designed to publish my work : arrangements were made at a provincial press, about eighteen miles distant, for printing it. An additional compositor was retained, for some days, on this account. The work was even twice advertised : and I was, in a manner, pledged to the fulfilment of my intention. But I had a preface to write ; and a dedication, which I wished to make a splendid one, to Mr. Ricardo. I found myself quite

unable to accomplish all this. The arrangements were countermanded : the compositor dismissed : and my "Prolegomena" rested peacefully by the side of its elder and more dignified brother.

I have thus described and illustrated my intellectual torpor, in terms that apply, more or less, to every part of the four years during which I was under the Circean spells of opium. But for misery and suffering, I might, indeed, be said to have existed in a dormant state. I seldom could prevail on myself to write a letter ; an answer of a few words, to any that I received, was the utmost that I could accomplish ; and often *that* not until the letter had lain weeks, or even months, on my writing table. Without the aid of M[argaret] all records of bills paid, or *to be* paid, must have perished : and my whole domestic economy, whatever became of Political Economy, must have gone into irretrievable confusion.—I shall not afterwards allude to this part of the case : it is one, however, which the opium-eater will find, in the end, as oppressive and tormenting as any other, from the sense of incapacity and feebleness, from the direct embarrassments incident to the neglect or procrastination of each day's appropriate duties, and from the remorse which must often exas-

perate the stings of these evils to a reflective and conscientious mind. The opium-eater loses none of his moral sensibilities, or aspirations : he wishes and longs, as earnestly as ever, to realize what he believes possible, and feels to be exacted by duty ; but his intellectual apprehension of what is possible infinitely outruns his power, not of execution only, but even of power to attempt. He lies under the weight of incubus and night-mare : he lies in sight of all that he would fain perform, just as a man forcibly confined to his bed by the mortal languor of a relaxing disease, who is compelled to witness injury or outrage offered to some object of his tenderest love :—he curses the spells which chain him down from motion :—he would lay down his life if he might but get up and walk ; but he is powerless as an infant, and cannot even attempt to rise.

I now pass to what is the main subject of these latter confessions, to the history and journal of what took place in my dreams ; for these were the immediate and proximate cause of my acutest suffering.

The first notice I had of any important change going on in this part of my physical economy, was from the re-awakening of a state of eye generally incident to childhood, or exalted states

of irritability. I know not whether my reader is aware that many children, perhaps most, have a power of painting, as it were, upon the darkness, all sorts of phantoms ; in some, that power is simply a mechanic affection of the eye ; others have a voluntary, or a semi-voluntary power to dismiss or to summon them ; or, as a child once said to me when I questioned him on this matter, " I can tell them to go, and they go ; but sometimes they come when I don't tell them to come." Whereupon I told him that he had almost as unlimited command over apparitions as a Roman centurion over his soldiers.—In the middle of 1817, I think it was, that this faculty became positively distressing to me : at night, when I lay awake in bed, vast processions passed along in mournful pomp ; friezes of never-ending stories, that to my feelings were as sad and solemn as if they were stories drawn from times before *Œdipus* or *Priam*—before *Tyre*—before *Memphis*. And, at the same time, a corresponding change took place in my dreams ; a theatre seemed suddenly opened and lighted up within my brain, which presented nightly spectacles of more than earthly splendour. And the four following facts may be mentioned, as noticeable at this time :

1. That, as the creative state of the eye in.

creased, a sympathy seemed to arise between the waking and the dreaming states of the brain in one point—that whatsoever I happened to call up and to trace by a voluntary act upon the darkness was very apt to transfer itself to my dreams ; so that I feared to exercise this faculty ; for, as Midas turned all things to gold, that yet baffled his hopes and defrauded his human desires, so whatsoever things capable of being visually represented I did but think of in the darkness, immediately shaped themselves into phantoms of the eye ; and, by a process apparently no less inevitable, when thus once traced in faint and visionary colours, like writings in sympathetic ink, they were drawn out by the fierce chemistry of my dreams, into insufferable splendour that fretted my heart.

2. For this, and all other changes in my dreams, were accompanied by deep-seated anxiety and gloomy melancholy, such as are wholly incommunicable by words. I seemed every night to descend, not metaphorically, but literally to descend, into chasms and sunless abysses, depths below depths, from which it seemed hopeless that I could ever reascend. Nor did I, by waking, feel that I *had* reascended. This I do not dwell upon ; because the state of gloom which attended these gorgeous spectacles,

amounting at least to utter darkness, as of some suicidal despondency, cannot be approached by words.

3. The sense of space, and in the end, the sense of time, were both powerfully affected. Buildings, landscapes, etc. were exhibited in proportions so vast as the bodily eye is not fitted to receive. Space swelled, and was amplified to an extent of unutterable infinity. This, however, did not disturb me so much as the vast expansion of time ; I sometimes seemed to have lived for 70 or 100 years in one night ; nay, sometimes had feelings representative of a millennium passed in that time, or, however, of a duration far beyond the limits of any human experience.

4. The minutest incidents of childhood, or forgotten scenes of later years, were often revived : I could not be said to recollect them ; for if I had been told of them when waking, I should not have been able to acknowledge them as parts of my past experience. But placed as they were before me, in dreams like intuitions, and clothed in all their evanescent circumstances and accompanying feelings, I *recognised* them instantaneously. I was once told by a near relative of mine, that having in her childhood fallen into a river, and being on the very verge of death but for the critical assistance which

reached her, she saw in a moment her whole life, in its minutest incidents, arrayed before her simultaneously as in a mirror; and she had a faculty developed as suddenly for comprehending the whole and every part. This, from some opium experiences of mine, I can believe; I have, indeed, seen the same thing asserted twice in modern books, and accompanied by a remark which I am convinced is true; viz. that the dread book of account which the Scriptures speak of is, in fact, the mind itself of each individual. Of this, at least, I feel assured, that there is no such thing as *forgetting* possible to the mind; a thousand accidents may and will interpose a veil between our present consciousness and the secret inscriptions on the mind; accidents of the same sort will also rend away this veil; but alike, whether veiled or unveiled, the inscription remains for ever; just as the stars seem to withdraw before the common light of day, whereas, in fact, we all know that it is the light which is drawn over them as a veil—and that they are waiting to be revealed, when the obscuring daylight shall have withdrawn.

Having noticed these four facts as memorably distinguishing my dreams from those of health, I shall now cite a case illustrative of the first fact; and shall then cite any others that I re-

member, either in their chronological order, or any other that may give them more effect as pictures to the reader.

I had been in youth, and even since, for occasional amusement, a great reader of Livy, whom, I confess, that I prefer, both for style and matter, to any other of the Roman historians; and I had often felt as most solemn and appalling sounds, and most emphatically representative of the majesty of the Roman people, the two words so often occurring in Livy—*Consul Romanus*; especially when the consul is introduced in his military character. I mean to say, that the words king—sultan—regent, &c. or any other titles of those who embody in their own persons the collective majesty of a great people, had less power over my reverential feelings. I had also, though no great reader of history, made myself minutely and critically familiar with one period of English history, viz. the period of the Parliamentary War, having been attracted by the moral grandeur of some who figured in that day, and by the many interesting memoirs which survive those unquiet times. Both these parts of my lighter reading, having furnished me often with matter of reflection, now furnished me with matter for my dreams. Often I used to see, after painting upon the blank darkness a sort of

rehearsal whilst waking, a crowd of ladies, and perhaps a festival, and dances. And I heard it said, or I said to myself, "These are English ladies from the unhappy times of Charles I. These are the wives and the daughters of those who met in peace, and sat at the same tables, and were allied by marriage or by blood; and yet, after a certain day in August, 1642, never smiled upon each other again, nor met but in the field of battle; and at Marston Moor, at Newbury, or at Naseby, cut asunder all ties of love by the cruel sabre, and washed away in blood the memory of ancient friendship."—The ladies danced, and looked as lovely as the court of George IV. Yet I knew, even in my dream, that they had been in the grave for nearly two centuries.—This pageant would suddenly dissolve: and, at a clapping of hands, would be heard the heart-quaking sound of *Consul Romanus*: and immediately came "sweeping by," in gorgeous paludaments, Paulus or Marius, girt round by a company of centurions, with the crimson tunic hoisted on a spear, and followed by the *alalagmos* of the Roman legions.

Many years ago, when I was looking over Piranesi's Antiquities of Rome, Mr. Coleridge, who was standing by, described to me a set of plates by that artist, called his *Dreams*, and

which record the scenery of his own visions during the delirium of a fever : Some of them (I describe only from memory of Mr. Coleridge's account) representing vast Gothic halls : on the floor of which stood all sorts of engines and machinery, wheels, cables, pulleys, levers, catapults, etc. etc. expressive of enormous power put forth, and resistance overcome. Creeping along the sides of the walls, you perceived a staircase ; and upon it, groping his way upwards, was Piranesi himself : follow the stairs a little further, and you perceive it come to a sudden abrupt termination, without any balustrade, and allowing no step onwards to him who had reached the extremity, except into the depths below. Whatever is to become of poor Piranesi, you suppose, at least, that his labours must in some way terminate here. But raise your eyes, and behold a second flight of stairs still higher : on which again Piranesi is perceived, but this time standing on the very brink of the abyss. Again elevate your eye, and a still more aerial flight of stairs is beheld : and again is poor Piranesi busy on his aspiring labours : and so on, until the unfinished stairs and Piranesi both are lost in the upper gloom of the hall.—With the same power of endless growth and self-reproduction did my architecture proceed in dreams. In the early

stage of my malady, the splendours of my dreams were indeed chiefly architectural : and I beheld such pomp of cities and palaces as was never yet beheld by the waking eye, unless in the clouds. From a great modern poet I cite part of a passage which describes, as an appearance actually beheld in the clouds, what in many of its circumstances I saw frequently in sleep :

The appearance, instantaneously disclosed,
Was of a mighty city—boldly say
A wilderness of building, sinking far
And self-withdrawn into a wondrous depth,
Far sinking into splendour—without end !
Fabric it seem'd of diamond, and of gold,
With alabaster domes, and silver spires,
And blazing terrace upon terrace, high
Uplifted ; here, serene pavilions bright
In avenues disposed ; there towers begirt
With battlements that on their restless fronts
Bore stars—illumination of all gems !
By earthly nature had the effect been wrought
Upon the dark materials of the storm
Now pacified : on them, and on the coves,
And mountain-steeps and summits, whereunto
The vapours had receded,—taking there
Their station under a cerulean sky, etc. etc.

The sublime circumstance—"battlements that on their *restless* fronts bore stars,"—might have been copied from my architectural dreams, for

it often occurred.—We hear it reported of Dryden, and of Fuseli in modern times, that they thought proper to eat raw meat for the sake of obtaining splendid dreams : how much better for such a purpose to have eaten opium, which yet I do not remember that any poet is recorded to have done, except the dramatist Shadwell : and in ancient days, Homer is, I think, rightly reputed to have known the virtues of opium.

To my architecture succeeded dreams of lakes and silvery expanses of water :—these haunted me so much that I feared, though possibly it will appear ludicrous to a medical man, that some dropsical state or tendency of the brain might thus be making itself, to use a metaphysical word, *objective* ; and the sentient organ *project* itself as its own object.—For two months I suffered greatly in my head—a part of my bodily structure which had hitherto been so clear from all touch or taint of weakness, physically, I mean, that I used to say of it, as the last Lord Orford said of his stomach, that it seemed likely to survive the rest of my person.—Till now I had never felt a headache even, or any the slightest pain, except rheumatic pains caused by my own folly. However, I got over this attack, though it must have been verging on something very dangerous.

The waters now changed their character,—from translucent lakes, shining like mirrors, they now became seas and oceans. And now came a tremendous change, which, unfolding itself slowly like a scroll, through many months, promised an abiding torment ; and, in fact, it never left me until the winding up of my case. Hitherto the human face had mixed often in my dreams, but not despotically, nor with any special power of tormenting. But now that which I have called the tyranny of the human face began to unfold itself. Perhaps some part of my London life might be answerable for this. Be that as it may, now it was that upon the rocking waters of the ocean the human face began to appear : the sea appeared paved with innumerable faces, upturned to the heavens : faces, imploring, wrathful, despairing, surged upwards by thousands, by myriads, by generations, by centuries :—my agitation was infinite,—my mind tossed—and surged with the ocean.

May, 1818.

The Malay has been a fearful enemy for months. I have been every night, through his means, transported into Asiatic scenes. I know not whether others share in my feelings on this

point ; but I have often thought that if I were compelled to forego England, and to live in China, and among Chinese manners and modes of life and scenery, I should go mad. The causes of my horror lie deep ; and some of them must be common to others. Southern Asia, in general, is the seat of awful images and associations. As the cradle of the human race, it would alone have a dim and reverential feeling connected with it. But there are other reasons. No man can pretend that the wild, barbarous, and capricious superstitions of Africa, or of savage tribes elsewhere, affect him in the way that he is affected by the ancient, monumental, cruel, and elaborate religions of Indostan, etc. The mere antiquity of Asiatic things, of their institutions, histories, modes of faith, etc. is so impressive, that to me the vast age of the race and name overpowers the sense of youth in the individual. A young Chinese seems to me an antediluvian man renewed. Even Englishmen, though not bred in any knowledge of such institutions, cannot but shudder at the mystic sublimity of *castes* that have flowed apart, and refused to mix, through such immemorial tracts of time ; nor can any man fail to be awed by the names of the Ganges or the Euphrates. It contributes much to these feelings that southern Asia is, and has been for

thousands of years, the part of the earth most swarming with human life ; the great *officina gentium*. Man is a weed in those regions. The vast empires also, into which the enormous population of Asia has always been cast, give a further sublimity to the feelings associated with all Oriental names or images. In China, over and above what it has in common with the rest of southern Asia, I am terrified by the modes of life, by the manners, and the barrier of utter abhorrence, and want of sympathy, placed between us by feelings deeper than I can analyze. I could sooner live with lunatics, or brute animals. All this, and much more than I can say, or have time to say, the reader must enter into before he can comprehend the unimaginable horror which these dreams of Oriental imagery, and mythological tortures, impressed upon me. Under the connecting feeling of tropical heat and vertical sun-lights, I brought together all creatures, birds, beasts, reptiles, all trees and plants, usages and appearances, that are found in all tropical regions, and assembled them together in China or Indostan. From kindred feelings, I soon brought Egypt and all her gods under the same law. I was stared at, hooted at, grinned at, chattered at, by monkeys, by paroquets, by cockatoos. I ran into pagodas : and was fixed for centuries at

the summit, or in secret rooms ; I was the idol ; I was the priest ; I was worshipped ; I was sacrificed. I fled from the wrath of Brama through all the forests of Asia : Vishnu hated me : Seeva laid wait for me. I came suddenly upon Isis and Osiris : I had done a deed, they said, which the ibis and the crocodile trembled at. I was buried for a thousand years in stone coffins, with mummies and sphinxes, in narrow chambers at the heart of eternal pyramids. I was kissed, with cancerous kisses, by crocodiles : and laid, confounded with all unutterable slimy things, amongst reeds and Nilotic mud.

I thus give the reader some slight abstraction of my Oriental dreams, which always filled me with such amazement at the monstrous scenery, that horror seemed absorbed, for a while, in sheer astonishment. Sooner or later, came a reflux of feeling that swallowed up the astonishment, and left me, not so much in terror, as in hatred and abomination of what I saw. Over every form, and threat, and punishment, and dim sightless incarceration, brooded a sense of eternity and infinity that drove me into an oppression as of madness. Into these dreams only, it was, with one or two slight exceptions, that any circumstances of physical horror entered. All before had been moral and spiritual terrors.

But here the main agents were ugly birds, or snakes, or crocodiles ; especially the last. The cursed crocodile became to me the object of more horror than almost all the rest. I was compelled to live with him ; and (as was always the case almost in my dreams) for centuries. I escaped sometimes, and found myself in Chinese houses, with cane tables, etc. All the feet of the tables, sofas, etc. soon became instinct with life : the abominable head of the crocodile, and his leering eyes, looked out at me, multiplied into a thousand repetitions : and I stood loathing and fascinated. And so often did this hideous reptile haunt my dreams, that many times the very same dream was broken up in the very same way : I heard gentle voices speaking to me (I hear everything when I am sleeping) ; and instantly I awoke : it was broad noon ; and my children were standing, hand in hand, at my bed-side ; come to show me their coloured shoes, or new frocks, or to let me see them dressed for going out. I protest that so awful was the transition from the damned crocodile, and the other unutterable monsters and abortions of my dreams, to the sight of innocent *human* natures and of infancy, that, in the mighty and sudden revulsion of mind, I wept, and could not forbear it, as I kissed their faces.

June, 1819.

I have had occasion to remark, at various periods of my life, that the deaths of those whom we love, and indeed the contemplation of death generally, is (*ceteris paribus*) more affecting in summer than in any other season of the year. And the reasons are these three, I think : first, that the visible heavens in summer appear far higher, more distant, and (if such a solecism may be excused) more infinite ; the clouds, by which chiefly the eye expounds the distance of the blue pavilion stretched over our heads, are in summer more voluminous, massed, and accumulated in far grander and more towering piles : secondly, the light and the appearances of the declining and the setting sun are much more fitted to be types and characters of the Infinite : and, thirdly, which is the main reason, the exuberant and riotous prodigality of life naturally forces the mind more powerfully upon the antagonist thought of death, and the wintry sterility of the grave. For it may be observed, generally, that wherever two thoughts stand related to each other by a law of antagonism, and exist, as it were, by mutual repulsion, they are apt to suggest each other. On these accounts it is that I find it impossible to banish the thought of death when I am walking alone

in the endless days of summer ; and any particular death, if not more affecting, at least haunts my mind more obstinately and besiegingly in that season. Perhaps this cause, and a slight incident which I omit, might have been the immediate occasions of the following dream ; to which, however, a predisposition must always have existed in my mind ; but having been once roused, it never left me, and split into a thousand fantastic varieties, which often suddenly reunited, and composed again the original dream.

I thought that it was a Sunday morning in May, that it was Easter Sunday, and as yet very early in the morning. I was standing, as it seemed to me, at the door of my own cottage. Right before me lay the very scene which could really be commanded from that situation, but exalted, as was usual, and solemnized by the power of dreams. There were the same mountains, and the same lovely valley at their feet ; but the mountains were raised to more than Alpine height, and there was interspace far larger between them of meadows and forest lawns ; the hedges were rich with white roses ; and no living creature was to be seen, excepting that in the green churchyard there were cattle tranquilly reposing upon the verdant graves,

and particularly round about the grave of a child whom I had tenderly loved, just as I had really beheld them, a little before sunrise in the same summer, when that child died. I gazed upon the well-known scene, and I said aloud (as I thought) to myself, "It yet wants much of sun-rise; and it is Easter Sunday; and that is the day on which they celebrate the first-fruits of resurrection. I will walk abroad; old griefs shall be forgotten to-day; for the air is cool and still, and the hills are high, and stretch away to heaven; and the forest-glades are as quiet as the churchyard; and, with the dew I can wash the fever from my forehead, and then I shall be unhappy no longer." And I turned, as if to open my garden gate; and immediately I saw upon the left a scene far different; but which yet the power of dreams had reconciled into harmony with the other. The scene was an Oriental one; and there also it was Easter Sunday, and very early in the morning. And at a vast distance were visible, as a stain upon the horizon, the domes and cupolas of a great city—an image or faint abstraction, caught perhaps in childhood from some picture of Jerusalem. And not a bow-shot from me, upon a stone, and shaded by Judean palms, there sat a woman; and I looked; and it was—Ann! She

fixed her eyes upon me earnestly ; and I said to her at length : "So then I have found you at last." I waited : but she answered me not a word. Her face was the same as when I saw it last, and yet again how different ! Seventeen years ago, when the lamp-light fell upon her face, as for the last time I kissed her lips (lips, Ann, that to me were not polluted), her eyes were streaming with tears : the tears were now wiped away ; she seemed more beautiful than she was at that time, but in all other points the same, and not older. Her looks were tranquil, but with unusual solemnity of expression ; and I now gazed upon her with some awe, but suddenly her countenance grew dim, and, turning to the mountains, I perceived vapours rolling between us ; in a moment, all had vanished ; thick darkness came on ; and, in the twinkling of an eye, I was far away from mountains, and by lamp-light in Oxford-street, walking again with Ann—just as we walked seventeen years before, when we were both children.

As a final specimen, I cite one of a different character, from 1820.

The dream commenced with a music which now I often heard in dreams—a music of preparation and of awakening suspense ; a music

like the opening of the Coronation Anthem, and which, like *that*, gave the feeling of a vast march—of infinite cavalcades filing off—and the tread of innumerable armies. The morning was come of a mighty day—a day of crisis and of final hope for human nature, then suffering some mysterious eclipse, and labouring in some dread extremity. Somewhere, I knew not where—somehow, I knew not how—by some beings, I knew not whom—a battle, a strife, an agony, was conducting,—was evolving like a great drama, or piece of music ; with which my sympathy was the more insupportable from my confusion as to its place, its cause, its nature, and its possible issue. I, as is usual in dreams (where, of necessity, we make ourselves central to every movement), had the power, and yet had not the power, to decide it. I had the power, if I could raise myself, to will it ; and yet again had not the power, for the weight of twenty Atlantics was upon me, or the oppression of inexpiable guilt. “Deeper than ever plummet sounded,” I lay inactive. Then, like a chorus, the passion deepened. Some greater interest was at stake ; some mightier cause than ever yet the sword had pleaded, or trumpet had proclaimed. Then came sudden alarms : hurrying to and fro : trepidations of innumerable fugitives, I knew

not whether from the good cause or the bad : darkness and lights : tempest and human faces : and at last, with the sense that all was lost, female forms, and the features that were worth all the world to me, and but a moment allowed, —and clasped hands, and heart-breaking partings, and then—everlasting farewells ! and with a sigh, such as the caves of hell sighed when the incestuous mother uttered the abhorred name of death, the sound was reverberated—everlasting farewells ! and again, and yet again reverberated—everlasting farewells !

And I awoke in struggles, and cried aloud—
“ I will sleep no more ! ”

But I am now called upon to wind up a narrative which has already extended to an unreasonable length. Within more spacious limits, the materials which I have used might have been better unfolded ; and much which I have not used might have been added with effect. Perhaps, however, enough has been given. It now remains that I should say something of the way in which this conflict of horrors was finally brought to its crisis. The reader is already aware (from a passage near the beginning of the introduction to the first part) that the opium-eater has, in some way or other, “unwound,

almost to its final links, the accursed chain which bound him." By what means? To have narrated this, according to the original intention, would have far exceeded the space which can now be allowed. It is fortunate, as such a cogent reason exists for abridging it, that I should, on a maturer view of the case, have been exceedingly unwilling to injure, by any such unaffecting details, the impression of the history itself, as an appeal to the prudence and the conscience of the yet unconfirmed opium-eater—or even, though a very inferior consideration, to injure its effect as a composition. The interest of the judicious reader will not attach itself chiefly to the subject of the fascinating spells, but to the fascinating power. Not the opium-eater, but the opium, is the true hero of the tale; and the legitimate centre on which the interest revolves. The object was to display the marvellous agency of opium, whether for pleasure or for pain: if that is done, the action of the piece has closed.

However, as some people, in spite of all laws to the contrary, will persist in asking what became of the opium-eater, and in what state he now is, I answer for him thus: The reader is aware that opium had long ceased to found its empire on spells of pleasure; it was solely by the

tortures connected with the attempt to abjure it, that it kept its hold. Yet, as other tortures, no less it may be thought, attended the non-abjuration of such a tyrant, a choice only of evils was left ; and *that* might as well have been adopted, which, however terrific in itself, held out a prospect of final restoration to happiness. This appears true ; but good logic gave the author no strength to act upon it. However, a crisis arrived for the author's life, and a crisis for other objects still dearer to him—and which will always be far dearer to him than his life, even now that it is again a happy one.—I saw that I must die if I continued the opium : I determined, therefore, if that should be required, to die in throwing it off. How much I was at that time taking I cannot say ; for the opium which I used had been purchased for me by a friend who afterwards refused to let me pay him ; so that I could not ascertain even what quantity I had used within the year. I apprehend, however, that I took it very irregularly : and that I varied from about fifty or sixty grains, to 150 a-day. My first task was to reduce it to forty, to thirty, and, as fast as I could, to twelve grains.

I triumphed : but think not, reader, that therefore my sufferings were ended ; nor think of me as of one sitting in a *dejected* state. Think of

me as of one, even when four months had passed, still agitated, writhing, throbbing, palpitating, shattered ; and much, perhaps, in the situation of him who has been racked, as I collect the torments of that state from the affecting account of them left by the most innocent sufferer of the times of James I. Meantime, I derived no benefit from any medicine, except one prescribed to me by an Edinburgh surgeon of great eminence, viz. ammoniated tincture of valerian. Medical account, therefore, of my emancipation I have not much to give : and even that little, as managed by a man so ignorant of medicine as myself, would probably tend only to mislead. At all events, it would be misplaced in this situation. The moral of the narrative is addressed to the opium-eater ; and therefore, of necessity, limited in its application. If he is taught to fear and tremble, enough has been effected. But he may say, that the issue of my case is at least a proof that opium, after a seventeen years' use, and an eight years' abuse of its powers, may still be renounced : and that *he* may chance to bring to the task greater energy than I did, or that with a stronger constitution than mine he may obtain the same results with less. This may be true : I would not presume to measure the efforts of other men by my own : I heartily wish him more

energy : I wish him the same success. Nevertheless, I had motives external to myself which he may unfortunately want : and these supplied me with conscientious supports which mere personal interests might fail to supply to a mind debilitated by opium.

Lord Bacon conjectures that it may be as painful to be born as to die : I think it probable : and, during the whole period of diminishing the opium, I had the torments of a man passing out of one mode of existence into another. The issue was not death, but a sort of physical regeneration : and I may add, that ever since, at intervals, I have had a restoration of more than youthful spirits, though under the pressure of difficulties, which, in a less happy state of mind, I should have called misfortunes.

One memorial of my former condition still remains : my dreams are not yet perfectly calm : the dread swell and agitation of the storm have not wholly subsided : the legions that encamped in them are drawing off, but not all departed : my sleep is still tumultuous, and, like the gates of Paradise to our first parents when looking back from afar, it is still, in the tremendous line of Milton—

With dreadful faces throng'd and fiery arms.

APPENDIX.

THE proprietors of this little work having determined on reprinting it, some explanation seems called for, to account for the non-appearance of a Third Part promised in the London Magazine of December last ; and the more so, because the proprietors, under whose guarantee that promise was issued, might otherwise be implicated in the blame—little or much—attached to its non-fulfilment. This blame, in mere justice, the author takes wholly upon himself. What may be the exact amount of the guilt which he thus appropriates, is a very dark question to his own judgment, and not much illuminated by any of the masters in casuistry whom he has consulted on the occasion. On the one hand it seems generally agreed that a promise is binding in the *inverse* ratio of the numbers to whom it is made : for which reason it is that we see many persons break promises without scruple that are made to

a whole nation, who keep their faith religiously in all private engagements,—breaches of promise towards the stronger party being committed at a man's own peril : on the other hand, the only parties interested in the promises of an author are his readers ; and these it is a point of modesty in any author to believe as few as possible ; or perhaps only one, in which case any promise imposes a sanctity of moral obligation which it is shocking to think of. Casuistry dismissed however,—the author throws himself on the indulgent consideration of all who may conceive themselves aggrieved by his delay—in the following account of his own condition from the end of last year, when the engagement was made, up nearly to the present time. For any purpose of self-excuse, it might be sufficient to say that intolerable bodily suffering had totally disabled him for almost any exertion of mind, more especially for such as demand and presuppose a pleasurable and genial state of feeling : but, as a case that may by possibility contribute a trifle to the medical history of Opium in a further stage of its action than can often have been brought under the notice of professional men, he has judged that it might be acceptable to some readers to have it described more at length. *Fiat experimentum in corpore vili* is a just rule

where there is any reasonable presumption of benefit to arise on a large scale ; what the benefit may be, will admit of a doubt : but there can be none as to the value of the body : for a more worthless body than his own, the author is free to confess, cannot be : it is his pride to believe—that it is the very ideal of a base, crazy, despicable human system—that hardly ever could have been meant to be sea-worthy for two days under the ordinary storms and wear-and-tear of life : and indeed, if that were the creditable way of disposing of human bodies, he must own that he should almost be ashamed to bequeath his wretched structure to any respectable dog.—But now to the case ; which, for the sake of avoiding the constant recurrence of a cumbersome periphrasis, the author will take the liberty of giving in the first person.

Those who have read the Confessions will have closed them with the impression that I had wholly renounced the use of Opium. This impression I meant to convey : and that for two reasons : first, because the very act of deliberately recording such a state of suffering necessarily presumes in the recorder a power of surveying his own case as a cool spectator, and a degree of spirits for adequately describing it, which it

would be inconsistent to suppose in any person speaking from the station of an actual sufferer : secondly, because I, who had descended from so large a quantity as 8,000 drops to so small a one (comparatively speaking) as a quantity ranging between 300 and 160 drops, might well suppose that the victory was in effect achieved. In suffering my readers therefore to think of me as of a reformed opium-eater, I left no impression but what I shared myself ; and, as may be seen, even this impression was left to be collected from the general tone of the conclusion, and not from any specific words—which are in no instance at variance with the literal truth.—In no long time after that paper was written, I became sensible that the effort which remained would cost me far more energy than I had anticipated : and the necessity for making it was more apparent every month. In particular I became aware of an increasing callousness or defect of sensibility in the stomach ; and this I imagined might imply a schirrous state of that organ either formed or forming. An eminent physician, to whose kindness I was at that time deeply indebted, informed me that such a termination of my case was not impossible, though likely to be forestalled by a different termination, in the event of my continuing the use of opium. Opium therefore I resolved

wholly to abjure, as soon as I should find myself at liberty to bend my undivided attention and energy to this purpose. It was not however until the 24th of June last that any tolerable concurrence of facilities for such an attempt arrived. On that day I began my experiment, having previously settled in my own mind that I would not flinch, but would "stand up to the scratch"—under any possible "punishment." I must premise that about 170 or 180 drops had been my ordinary allowance for many months: occasionally I had run up as high as 500; and once nearly to 700: in repeated preludes to my final experiment I had also gone as low as 100 drops; but had found it impossible to stand it beyond the 4th day—which, by the way, I have always found more difficult to get over than any of the preceding three. I went off under easy sail—130 drops a day for 3 days: on the 4th I plunged at once to 80: the misery which I now suffered "took the conceit" out of me at once: and for about a month I continued off and on about this mark: then I sunk to 60: and the next day to — none at all. This was the first day for nearly ten years that I had existed without opium. I persevered in my abstinence for 90 hours; i.e. upwards of half a week. Then I took — ask me not how much: say, ye

severest, what would ye have done? then I abstained again : then took about 25 drops : then abstained : and so on.

Meantime the symptoms which attended my case for the first six weeks of the experiment were these :—enormous irritability and excitement of the whole system : the stomach in particular restored to a full feeling of vitality and sensibility ; but often in great pain : unceasing restlessness night and day : sleep — I scarcely knew what it was : three hours out of the twenty-four was the utmost I had, and that so agitated and shallow that I heard every sound that was near me : lower jaw constantly swelling : mouth ulcerated : and many other distressing symptoms that would be tedious to repeat ; amongst which however I must mention one, because it had never failed to accompany any attempt to renounce opium—viz. violent sternutation : this now became exceedingly troublesome : sometimes lasting for two hours at once, and recurring at least twice or three times a day. I was not much surprised at this, on recollecting what I had somewhere heard or read, that the membrane which lines the nostrils is a prolongation of that which lines the stomach ; whence I believe are explained the inflammatory appearances about the nostrils of dram-drinkers. The sudden restoration of its

original sensibility to the stomach expressed itself, I suppose, in this way. It is remarkable also that, during the whole period of years through which I had taken opium, I had never once caught cold (as the phrase is), nor even the slightest cough. But now a violent cold attacked me, and a cough soon after. In an unfinished fragment of a letter begun about this time to — I find these words : “ You ask me to write the — —. Do you know Beaumont and Fletcher’s play of Thierry and Theodoret ? There you will see my case as to sleep : nor is it much of an exaggeration in other features.—I protest to you that I have a greater influx of thoughts in one hour at present than in a whole year under the reign of opium. It seems as though all the thoughts which had been frozen up for a decad of years by opium, had now according to the old fable been thawed at once—such a multitude stream in upon me from all quarters. Yet such is my impatience and hideous irritability—that, for one which I detain and write down, fifty escape me : in spite of my weariness from suffering and want of sleep, I cannot stand still or sit for two minutes together. *‘I nunc, et versus tecum meditare canoros.’* ”

At this stage of my experiment I sent to a neighbouring surgeon, requesting that he would

come over to see me. In the evening he came : and after briefly stating the case to him, I asked this question :—Whether he did not think that the opium might have acted as a stimulus to the digestive organs ; and that the present state of suffering in the stomach, which manifestly was the cause of the inability to sleep, might arise from indigestion ? His answer was—No : on the contrary he thought that the suffering was caused by digestion itself—which should naturally go on below the consciousness, but which from the unnatural state of the stomach, vitiated by so long a use of opium, was become distinctly perceptible. This opinion was plausible : and the unintermitting nature of the suffering disposes me to think that it was true : for, if it had been any mere *irregular* affection of the stomach, it should naturally have intermitted occasionally, and constantly fluctuated as to degree. The intention of nature, as manifested in the healthy state, obviously is to withdraw from our notice all the vital motions, such as the circulation of the blood, the expansion and contraction of the lungs, the peristaltic action of the stomach, etc. ; and opium, it seems, is able in this as in other instances to counteract her purposes.—By the advice of the surgeon I tried *bitters* : for a short time these greatly mitigated the feelings under

which I laboured : but about the forty-second day of the experiment the symptoms already noticed began to retire, and new ones to arise of a different and far more tormenting class : under these, but with a few intervals of remission, I have since continued to suffer. But I dismiss them undescribed for two reasons : 1st, because the mind revolts from retracing circumstantially any sufferings from which it is removed by too short or by no interval : to do this with minuteness enough to make the review of any use—would be indeed “*infandum renovare dolorem*,” and possibly without a sufficient motive : for 2dly, I doubt whether this latter state be any way referable to opium—positively considered, or even negatively ; that is, whether it is to be numbered amongst the last evils from the direct action of opium, or even amongst the earliest evils consequent upon a *want* of opium in a system long deranged by its use. Certainly one part of the symptoms might be accounted for from the time of year (August) : for, though the summer was not a hot one, yet in any case the sum of all the heat *funded*, if one may say so, during the previous months, added to the existing heat of that month, naturally renders August in its better half the hottest part of the year : and it so happened that the excessive perspiration,

which even at Christmas attends any great reduction in the daily quantum of opium—and which in July was so violent as to oblige me to use a bath five or six times a day, had about the setting in of the hottest season wholly retired : on which account any bad effect of the heat might be the more unmitigated. Another symptom, viz. what in my ignorance I call internal rheumatism, sometimes affecting the shoulders, etc., but more often appearing to be seated in the stomach, seemed again less probably attributable to the opium or the want of opium than to the dampness of the house which I inhabit, which had about that time attained its maximum—July having been, as usual, a month of incessant rain in our most rainy part of England.

Under these reasons for doubting whether opium had any connexion with the latter stage of my bodily wretchedness—except indeed as an occasional cause, as having left the body weaker and more crazy, and thus pre-disposed to any mal-influence whatever,—I willingly spare my reader all description of it : let it perish to him : and would that I could as easily say, let it perish to my own remembrances : that any future hours of tranquillity may not be disturbed by too vivid an ideal of possible human misery !

So much for the sequel of my experiment :

as to the former stage, in which properly lies the experiment and its application to other cases, I must request my reader not to forget the reasons for which I have recorded it : these were two : 1st, a belief that I might add some trifle to the history of opium as a medical agent : in this I am aware that I have not at all fulfilled my own intentions, in consequence of the torpor of mind—pain of body—and extreme disgust to the subject which besieged me whilst writing that part of my paper ; which part, being immediately sent off to the press (distant about five degrees of latitude), cannot be corrected or improved. But from this account, rambling as it may be, it is evident that thus much of benefit may arise to the persons most interested in such a history of opium—viz. to opium-eaters in general—that it establishes, for their consolation and encouragement, the fact that opium may be renounced ; and without greater sufferings than an ordinary resolution may support ; and by a pretty rapid course of descent.

To communicate this result of my experiment—was my foremost purpose. 2dly, as a purpose collateral to this, I wished to explain how it had become impossible for me to compose a Third Part in time to accompany this republication : for during the very time of this experiment, the

proof sheets of this reprint were sent to me from London : and such was my inability to expand or to improve them, that I could not even bear to read them over with attention enough to notice the press errors, or to correct any verbal inaccuracies. These were my reasons for troubling my reader with any record, long or short, of experiments relating to so truly base a subject as my own body : and I am earnest with the reader that he will not forget them, or so far misapprehend me as to believe it possible that I would condescend to so rascally a subject for its own sake, or indeed for any less object than that of general benefit to others. Such an animal as the self-observing valetudinarian—I know there is : I have met him myself occasionally : and I know that he is the worst imaginable *heautontimoroumenos*; aggravating and sustaining, by calling into distinct consciousness, every symptom that would else perhaps—under a different direction given to the thoughts—become evanescent. But as to myself, so profound is my contempt for this undignified and selfish habit, that I could as little condescend to it as I could to spend my time in watching a poor servant girl—to whom at this moment I hear some lad or other making love at the back of my house. Is it for a Transcendental Philosopher to feel any curiosity on

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such an occasion? Or can I, whose life is worth only $8\frac{1}{2}$ years' purchase, be supposed to have leisure for such trivial employments?—However, to put this out of question, I shall say one thing, which will perhaps shock some readers : but I am sure it ought not to do so, considering the motives on which I say it. No man, I suppose, employs much of his time on the phenomena of his own body without some regard for it ; whereas the reader sees that, so far from looking upon mine with any complacency or regard, I hate it and make it the object of my bitter ridicule and contempt : and I should not be displeased to know that the last indignities which the law inflicts upon the bodies of the worst malefactors might hereafter fall upon it. And, in testification of my sincerity in saying this, I shall make the following offer. Like other men, I have particular fancies about the place of my burial : having lived chiefly in a mountainous region, I rather cleave to the conceit that a grave in a green church yard amongst the ancient and solitary hills will be a sublimer and more tranquil place of repose for a philosopher than any in the hideous Golgothas of London. Yet if the gentlemen of Surgeons' Hall think that any benefit can redound to their science from inspecting the appearances in the body of an opium-

eater, let them speak but a word, and I will take care that mine shall be legally secured to them——i.e. as soon as I have done with it myself. Let them not hesitate to express their wishes upon any scruples of false delicacy, and consideration for my feelings : I assure them they will do me too much honour by ‘demonstrating’ on such a crazy body as mine : and it will give me pleasure to anticipate this posthumous revenge and insult inflicted upon that which has caused me so much suffering in this life. Such bequests are not common : reversionary benefits contingent upon the death of the testator are indeed dangerous to announce in many cases : of this we have a remarkable instance in the habits of a Roman prince—who used, upon any notification made to him by rich persons that they had left him a handsome estate in their wills, to express his entire satisfaction at such arrangements, and his gracious acceptance of those loyal legacies : but then, if the testators neglected to give him immediate possession of the property, if they traitorously ‘persisted in living’ (*si vivere perseverarent*, as Suetonius expresses it), he was highly provoked, and took his measures accordingly.—In those times, and from one of the worst of the Cæsars, we might expect such conduct : but I am sure that from English surgeons at

this day I need look for no expressions of impatience, or of any other feelings but such as are answerable to that pure love of science and all its interests which induces me to make such an offer.

Sept. 30th, 1822.

DE QUINCEY AND DE MUSSET.

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DE QUINCEY AND DE MUSSET.

THE existence of a French translation of the Opium-Eater from the pen of Alfred de Musset is probably unknown to most of the translator's countrymen. Scarcely any book has more narrowly escaped destruction. It had eluded the research of De Musset's own brother, the editor of his collected works, who knew indeed of its existence, but was unable to include it in his edition. The omission, with others of a like character, was pointed out with no little asperity in a pamphlet (*Étude critique et bibliographique des œuvres de Alfred de Musset, pouvant servir d'appendice à l'édition dite de souscription*, Paris, 1867), which has been attributed to M. Charles Asselineau. It was easier, however, to denounce the lacuna than to make it good. The volume remained inaccessible till the following year, when a copy was unearthed on a

quay of the Seine by "un enragé Mussolâtre, déterminé chasseur de livres, artiste aussi distingué que bibliophile heureux," M. Charles Soto.

From the period of his discovery M. Soto became intolerable to his fellow men. He was altogether too rampant for a frail and imperfect mortal. He would enter a bookseller's shop with the inquiry, "Have you De Musset's works complete?" Upon an affirmative reply he would rejoin, "Very good. Please then to inform me whether the *Opium-Eater* is in the *Œuvres Posthumes* or the *Mélanges de Littérature*?" knowing full well that it was in neither. The rich collectors and amateurs fled from him as from a basilisk. To bring him to reason it was needful that the Commune should burn his house. The precious volume escaped by miracle, and the humbled M. Soto, shuddering at the peril it had run, allowed M. Arthur Heulhard to print two hundred copies at the press of the *Moniteur du Bibliophile*.

The original edition had appeared in 1828, when De Musset was not quite eighteen. M. Heulhard gives some reasons, deduced chiefly from De Musset's correspondence at the time, for believing that he was at the period affected with a romantic, and as it were Platonic han-

kering after narcotics. However this may be, his discernment of the quality of De Quincey's work does honour to his critical penetration, little as this can be said of his attempts to improve upon it. De Musset's would-be embellishment of De Quincey is nevertheless too curious and too characteristic of French taste to be dismissed without further remark. Every English reader of the *Opium-Eater* has admired above all things the exquisite delicacy with which he has treated the episode of his Pariah-Saint, poor Ann of Oxford Street. Every repulsive feature in her circumstances is veiled with poetic haze: and though there is no prudery and no misrepresentation, she is left in the reader's imagination a gracious figure, a Magdalen without remorse or sackcloth. But this is only possible on condition that the situation shall not be too strictly defined, and that the character shall remain a fair dim vision, instead of taking substance as a *dramatis persona*. De Musset, with a Frenchman's constitutional dislike to the indefinite, could not see this; he thought Ann insufficiently provided for. It would be satisfactory to be quite sure that she rejoined the *Opium-Eater* in the land of the living, and was neither sent to Botany Bay nor starved in Oxford Street. He has accordingly interpo-

lated an episode which, though betraying great ignorance of English manners, is by no means ill-written, and might have been quite in place in an average French novel: but which definitely brings poor Ann down from the stars to the streets, and leaves a painful impression of the writer's insensibility at that period of his life to the conditions of true imaginative beauty. He was not without warning of the havoc he was committing. The fact that, to make room for his own irrelevancies, he was obliged to sacrifice a touching passage of the original, ought to have admonished him, the rather as another passage which consistency would have proscribed, admiration or negligence has reprieved. De Quincey's pathetic lamentation over his benefactress at the end of Part I. has naturally disappeared as superfluous. But the beautiful outburst at the end of De Quincey's account of the preservation of his life by Ann remains, although a sheer impertinence, a vain rhetorical gaud on any other supposition than that the episode was soon followed by an everlasting parting. As, however, the interpolation, unintelligent as it may be, is written with abundance of spirit, and the engrafting of De Musset upon De Quincey must in any case be regarded as a literary phenomenon, it follows here.

Un jour d'hiver de 1810, je me promenais sur les longues terrasses de la rue d'Oxford, absorbé dans mes réflexions ordinaires, lorsqu'un jeune officier de mes amis m'aborda. Il me trouva l'air sombre ; je voulus m'excuser ; il faisait froid, et cependant humide ; je souffrais de l'estomac ; il n'en crut rien.—Pour dissiper vos rêveries, dit-il, ce soir je vous emmène au bal—Au bal ! lui dis-je en secouant la tête—Ce n'est ni un concert, ni un rout, c'est un bal *à la française* que nous nous donnons ; vous y verrez tous les officiers du corps. Du reste, point de prudes, ajouta-t-il en souriant ; au lieu de vous montrer le plus sévères, je vous montrerai les plus jolies—Vous ne me connaissez pas, lui répondis-je ; j'ai eu des moments de gaieté dans ma vie, mais au bal je suis comme à un enterrement.—Nous vous égayerons, dit-il. Je me laissai emmener par distraction.

Nous entrons ; c'était la réunion la plus brillante. Moi, vêtu de noir, et les bras croisés, je m'en allai m'appuyer sur une colonne tout au fond de la salle. Si j'avais pris de l'opium ce soir, me disais-je, sans doute je serais plus en train de me divertir. Cependant on arrivait en foule ; j'entendais le *groom* principal crier à tue-tête le nom de ceux qui paraissaient dans la salle ; peu à peu ces visages nouveaux, qui

souvent même étaient fort jolis, me firent relever la tête. On annonça le marquis de C . . . ; il entra donnant la main à une femme que plusieurs jeunes gens entourèrent aussitôt. Un petit mouvement de curiosité me prit ; mais, au moment où je me levais, attendu que les coiffures et les plumes me gênaient, je sentis au cœur une douleur aiguë, et un frisson qui me parcourut des pieds à la tête ; je retombai assis. Ce que j'avais vu, je ne puis le dire. Lorsque je revins à moi, je ne trouvai dans ma mémoire qu'une robe de satin, un teint d'ivoire, des cheveux d'ébène, tressés en nattes et relevés derrière la tête : c'était la mode.

C'est elle, me dis-je, je l'ai vue. Je me mis debout, mais je la cherchai vainement dans la foule. Étrange vision ! me serais-je trompé ? Anna, celui qui m'aurait dit que je devais te retrouver ainsi, je l'aurais appelé un fou. Cependant le bruit des instruments se faisait entendre ; toute mon âme avait passé dans mes yeux ; mais elle n'était point parmi les danseuses ; il me fallut attendre qu'une longue et mortelle contre-danse fût terminée Alors je la revis.

Elle était pâle et couverte de diamants ; pourtant elle avait plutôt l'air sérieux que triste ; appuyée sur son bras nonchalamment, elle

refusait avec obstination quelques empressés. Ma première idée fut d'aller droit à elle Je tâchai de sortir de mon coin ; mais c'est alors que je me repentis de l'humeur taciturne qui m'avait conseillé de m'y mettre ; j'étais à une extrémité de la salle, et toutes les mères, les tantes, les sœurs aînées étaient devant moi. J'attendis donc, en frappant du pied et en sifflant entre mes dents, qu'une nouvelle contredanse, me débarrassant de ce rempart, ne laissât plus que la tapisserie.

Anna ou lady C , ou je ne sais qui (car, dans cette société plus que mêlée, mille idées différentes m'assiégeaient et me tourmentaient encore), refusait absolument de quitter sa place. Cependant lord C , qui se tenait d'un air froid à côté d'une table de jeu, alla lui parler à l'oreille ; elle se leva, prit la main d'un de ses *attentifs*, et vint se mettre devant moi.

Comment faire ? Elle me vit en passant, mais sans paraître m'observer ni me reconnaître ; cependant, à un second coup d'œil jeté de mon côté, il me sembla la voir plus pâle encore qu'auparavant ; je me trompais sans doute, car, dès que la contredanse fut achevée, elle prit le bras du marquis et sortit de la salle.

Nul ne peut concevoir mon profond étonnement ; stupéfait, debout comme une pierre, je

croyais avoir rêvé. Anna, te souvient-il, lorsqu'à la lueur des lampes nous marchions dans la rue d'Oxford ? te souvient-il de m'avoir vu ? te souvient-il de m'avoir aimé ? de n'avoir eu sur la terre que moi seul pour ami, pour consolation, lorsque partageant tout entre nous, nous ne pouvions partager que nos douleurs ? Cela est impossible, elle ne m'a pas reconnu. Et ce lord C , qu'est-il pour elle ? son mari ? son amant ? Je sortais aussi ; mon jeune officier me joignit à la porte.—Eh bien ! me dit-il, vous ai-je tenu ma promesse ? N'avons-nous pas ici le plus jolies femmes de Londres ?—Quelle est donc, lui répondis-je, celle qui vient de partir à l'instant avec le marquis de C ? Ah ! me dit-il en riant, c'est un espèce de *dame* ; ne l'avez vous pas trouvée charmante ?—Char-mante, je vous assure.—Vous sortez ? Quoi ! à la première entrevue, déjà prêt à la suivre ? Votre philosophie s'est égayée, j'avais raison, adieu !—Je vous jure—Ne jurez pas. Je ne veux pas vous retenir adieu

Je descendis lentement et me mis à marcher plus lentement encore ; je ne pris même pas garde qu'il pleuvait à verse, et que j'avais une longue route à faire. J'étais comme un homme à qui l'on vient de lire sa sentence de mort ; un coup terrible m'avait brisé.—Si l'on disait à un homme :

ton ami vient d'être assassiné, il crierait, il s'arracherait les cheveux dans son désespoir. Mais, si vous lui disiez : ton ami vient de commettre un assassinat, alors il se tairait, il baisserait la tête et cesserait de croire à la Providence. C'est dans cet état que je me trouvais. Oui, plutôt que de voir ainsi tomber toutes mes espérances comme tous mes souvenirs, se détruire le seul rêve de mes nuits, se rompre la seule corde qui vibrât encore dans mon cœur ; plutôt que de voir Anna devenir la maîtresse d'un marquis de C . . . j'aurais voulu la voir morte.

Je m'aperçus ou crus m'apercevoir que j'étais suivi. Deux hommes enveloppés de manteaux marchaient de toutes leurs forces derrière moi, et semblaient tâcher de me atteindre ; je ralentis le pas, et bientôt je les vis distinctement s'avancer de mon côté. L'un d'eux me dit :—Ne vous nommez-vous pas—? Oui, répondis-je, que me voulez vous?—Si vous avez du cœur, me répondit-il plus bas, trouvez-vous demain à dix heures précises, rue Albemarle, No. 6. Ils disparurent plus vite encore qu'ils n'étaient venus.

Le lendemain je fus exact au rendez-vous ; j'avais aussi peu d'ennemis que de bonnes fortunes ; je ne m'attendais ni à un duel ni à un déjeuner. On me fit entrer dans une petite

pièce basse et assez mal éclairée, où je vis une femme près de la cheminée, assise sur un sofa. — Laissez-nous, dit-elle, quand je fus introduit. C'était sa voix. Je restai debout sans pouvoir parler.

Elle se jeta à mon col. — C'est moi ! s'écriait-elle, ne me reconnaît-il plus ? Anna, lui dis-je, je te reconnais. Puis, revenant à moi : Madame, je vous ai reconnue hier ; si j'avais pu vous approcher ! . . . Asseyez-vous, dit-elle, et écoutez-moi ; nous n'avons pas de temps à perdre. Je m'assis auprès d'elle.

Ce que je craignais est donc arrivé ! Le seul homme qui eût compris mon cœur m'a jugée comme tout le monde ! Tant d'amitié, tant de souvenirs se sont effacés devant une toilette de bal, devant une parure de diamants ! C'est bien, cela devait être ainsi, et pourtant, ô mon Dieu ! en quoi l'ai-je donc mérité ? Écoutez-moi : je vous ai vu hier, j'ai deviné votre pensée, et ne pouvant la supporter, je me suis en allée.

Mais pourquoi, l'interrompis-je, pourquoi ce lord C à votre bras ? pourquoi cette fuite ? Anna, expliquez moi

Si vous m'aviez parlé hier, répondit-elle, c'eût été le plus grand de tous les malheurs, car je serais tombée par terre de faiblesse ; j'en étais sûre, vous m'avez jugée ainsi !

Lorsque vous me laissâtes, il y a deux ans, sur un banc, au coin d'une rue, pleurant votre départ, j'eus à peine la force de retourner chez moi. Il ne me restait plus rien. J'entrais dans ma maison, lorsque mon hôte, que je rencontrai sur le pas de la porte, me voyant dans l'état où j'étais, se mit à plaisanter. Est-il parti, dit-il en riant, ce cher ami ? Je passais sans répondre ; il m'en empêcha ; je me dégageai de ses bras en criant. Ce furent alors les injures qui succédèrent aux railleries. Sentant que je les méritais, je m'enfuyais pour les éviter ; il m'arrêta encore. Écoutez, me dit-il, je veux faire quelque chose pour vous, montez à votre chambre, faites un paquet de vos hardes, et puis alors . . . , et puis . . . , ajouta-t-il avec un grand éclat de rire, vous irez coucher où vous pourrez, ou bien où vous voudrez. Il y a assez longtemps que je vous garde chez moi par charité.

Je montai chez moi, je fis un paquet de mes hardes, je le payai, et je sortis à onze heures du soir sans avoir un gîte, sans savoir où aller. Je m'assis sur une borne et j'y demeurai comme immobile ; puis tout à coup je me mis à fondre en larmes.

Je marchai toute la nuit sans penser à rien, regardant la terre et les pavés humides, que je comptais machinalement ; le froid était aigu.

Lorsque le jour commença à paraître, me sentant accablée de fatigue, je m'endormis sur le boulevard. Je ne sais pas si je reposai longtemps, mais un homme qui me secouait le bras rudement m'éveilla ; je ne le connaissais point. Qui êtes-vous ? me dit-il ; pourquoi êtes-vous là ? Au lieu de lui répondre, je cherchais autour de moi le paquet que j'avais laissé tomber en m'endormant ; il n'y était plus. Je commençai à me tordre les mains et à pousser de cris de douleur. Qu'allais-je devenir ? Il ne faut pas vous désespérer, me dit-il (je crois encore l'entendre) ; il ne faut pas pleurer : venez avec moi. Que vous est-il arrivé ? qu'avez-vous ? Je n'avais pas la force de lui répondre ; il m'aida à me relever, je m'appuyai sur lui : puis, essayant de marcher, je me trouvai mal.

C'est une chose bien singulière que tout ce qui m'arriva dans cette matinée ; je pouvais aller coucher dans une autre maison, il me restait de quoi vivre quelques jours ; mais je n'avais plus ma tête : votre départ m'avait tuée.

Lorsque je revins à moi, j'étais dans une chambre très-riche et bien meublée, sur un lit de repos ; le même homme se tenait auprès de moi et semblait me prodiguer de soins : c'était le marquis de C . . . , celui que vous avez vu hier. Vous allez me dire qui vous êtes, s'écria-

t-il, car il faut que je le sache. Mes genoux tremblaient sous moi ; je n'osais pas lui dire toute la vérité. C'est bien, répliqua-t-il ; je ne serai pas pour vous comme un tyran de mélodrame, mais il faut m'écouter et m'obéir. Alors il me fit donner à manger, puis voyant que nous étions seuls, il s'assit près de moi, appuya son bras sur mon genou, et d'une voix presque basse il me tint un discours qui me fit horreur.

Je me levai tout à coup comme sortant d'un songe pénible, et je marchai vers la porte. Ah ! ah ! dit-il en riant, c'est très-bien ; mais la porte est fermée. Il courut après moi et me retint. Je le repoussai, il riait plus fort. Voyant que je prenais un couteau pour me défendre, il me l'ôta de la main et le jeta rudement par terre. Écoutez, me dit-il d'une voix de tonnerre, ceci est une plaisanterie ; vous êtes bien jeune pour être si méchante ; si vous voulez vivre, il faut rester ici. Qui sait, où vous êtes ? qui vous connaît ? qui vous reclamera ? Si vous étiez morte de faim et de froid au coin du boulevard, qui s'en serait inquiété ? Songez que vous n'existez plus pour le monde, que vous n'existez que pour moi. A ces mots, il se leva, ferma la porte et me laissa seule.

Mon ami, vous savez toute mon histoire ; je vécus comme dans un tombeau, ne voyant que

lui et une vieille domestique qui me gardait. Hélas ! je n'avais qu'une ressource, c'était de me tuer ; mais, mon ami, je suis une faible femme, je n'en ai pas eu le courage ! Ainsi le sort a épuisé sur moi toute sa colère ! Et pourtant qu'avais-je fait, ô mon Dieu ?

Cependant, quelques mois après, il me vint chercher en voiture, m'ordonna de m'habiller et me mena au bal ; et, de temps en temps, il continua ainsi de me tirer de ma prison pour une soirée. J'ai su plus tard que ces sortes de prisons avaient un nom plus noble, et que le monde les connaissait et les permettait.

Et puis, à qui m'adresser ? qui m'eût voulu croire ? J'aurais excité le sourire et non la pitié ! J'ai passé là, mon ami, plus d'une année ; je ne crois pas qu'on puisse être plus malheureuse que je l'étais. Hier, enfin, je vous ai aperçu. Rentrée chez moi à la hâte, pour la première fois, chose étrange, l'idée me vint de gagner ma vieille gardienne ; je lui offris un écrin de diamants ; elle l'accepta ; je vous fis suivre par mes gens et c'est ainsi que j'ai pu vous retrouver.

Anna, lui répondis-je, c'est à moi de vous sauver. Quand puis-je vous revoir ?

Demain matin, me dit-elle, à la même heure.

Elle regarda à une petite montre couverte de pierreries, qui pendait à sa ceinture. Déjà

si tard ! s'écria-t-elle ; s'il est rentré, je suis perdue !

Écoutez, écoutez, lui dis-je, je vous attends demain ; j'aurai des chevaux de poste et une épée. Que le ciel—

Et une voix forte cria derrière la porte :
" Anna, ouvrez, c'est moi ; ouvrez sur-le-champ."
Anna se leva et voulut aller ouvrir, mais elle n'en eut pas la force, et resta appuyée sur un fauteuil.

J'ouvris. Le marquis de C . . . entra.

Mort et damnation ! s'écria-t-il.

Monsieur, lui dis-je d'un grand sang froid, voulez vous que nous passions chez moi pour prendre des épées ? Me battre pour une fille ! dit-il. Mais qui se fait son champion ? Quelque misérable, digne de ses bonnes grâces.—(J'avoue qu'ici mon sang-froid se démentit.) Je lui donnai un soufflet. Un valet ! s'écria-t-il, un misérable !

Monsieur, répliquai-je, venez avec moi, si vous n'êtes pas un lâche ? Il me prit au collet. —Oui, dit-il, je vous suis ; venez avec moi. Puis il s'arrêta tout à coup :—Non, non, restons dans cette chambre. Pourquoi sortir ? Il alla à une petite armoire qui était dans le mur au fond de la chambre, et en tira deux épées et des pistolets.—Ceci fait moins de bruit, lui dis-je en prenant une épée. Nous ôtâmes nos habits.

J'ai déjà dit que la chambre était petite. Nous n'avions pour nous battre que l'espace du lit à la cheminée, et il était presque impossible de reculer. Anna était trop faible pour crier. Je la pris et l'assis sur le sopha qui était derrière moi. Lord C . . . ne disait plus rien ; il avait repris son air impassible, et essayait la pointe de son épée sur le tapis.

Nous commençâmes à nous battre. A la première attaque, je reçus un coup d'épée dans l'épaule gauche, et je fus forcé de m'appuyer sur le sopha. J'y portai la main ; ne voyant pas de sang, je me remis en garde, quoique sentant une douleur froide et cuisante. Lord C . . . paraît tous mes coups avec une tranquillité et une adresse qui m'inspirèrent de la rage. Je criais et je tournais autour de lui. Il demeurait ferme ; mais, me voyant faire une faute, tout à coup ses yeux s'animent ; il fondit sur moi de toutes ses forces. Il était grand, je parai le coup en levant son épée, qui perça le rideau. Alors reprenant tout mon avantage, je l'atteignis au dessous du bras, et l'étendis sur la place.

Sans dire un seul mot, et comme si je venais de faire la chose la plus simple du monde, je pris Anna dans mes bras. Le marquis, nous voyant sortir, jura et se débattit. Nous descendîmes. Trouvant une voiture de place sur

mon passage, je la mis dedans, et nous gagnâmes promptement la rue de . . . , où je logeais. En deux heures de temps nous eûmes des chevaux de poste ; j'envoyai un chirurgien au marquis, et nous partîmes.

Ce fut alors seulement que je pus réfléchir à l'action que je venais de commettre ; en même temps à ma blessure, qui, commençant à saigner beaucoup, m'affaiblissait. Nous nous arrêtâmes au premier relais, où je me fis panser (je n'étais pourtant pas blessé grièvement), en sorte que nous arrivâmes jusqu'ici sans accident.

The above proves that De Musset could write prose narrative wonderfully well at seventeen : that his genius was, in fact, morbidly precocious. Shelley had infinitely more to learn when he wrote "Zastrozzi" at the same age ; nay, even when he began the "Assassins" at twenty-two. As a translator De Musset has abundance of spirit, and a better acquaintance with English than could have been reasonably expected in so young a student. He would probably have made an excellent version if he had suspected that he was dealing with one of the world's classics. Not apprehending that De Quincey is an author with whom the translator must not trifle, he is continually committing sins of haste

and negligence, due in general to his indisposition to grapple fairly with a difficulty. He cuts some knots by simple omission, and wriggles out of the rest by substituting one idea for another, or by clever paraphrase. That Sherrard Street should become "la rue de Shersan," and Titchfield Street "Rich Field," was only to be expected. He cannot be so easily forgiven for leaving out De Quincey's simple and affecting reason for bidding farewell to Ann at the corner of Sherrard Street, his reluctance to part "in the tumult and blaze of Piccadilly." It is annoying to see jewels cast aside from sheer ignorance of their worth. The difficulty of translation may have had something to do with the more culpable and hardly credible omission of the magnificent induction to Part Second: all of which, from "So then, Oxford Street, stony-hearted stepmother," to "And that way I would fly for comfort," has utterly disappeared!

The following half-dozen instances, taken at random from the beginning of "The Pleasures of Opium," will exemplify the martyrdom which De Quincey is occasionally made to undergo, not so much from his translator's ignorance as from his impatience of trouble and indifference to verbal accuracy.

DE QUINCEY.

What solemn chords!
A mystic importance attached
to the minutest circum-
stances.

The stately Pantheon.

What seemed [to De Quincey]
to be real copper halfpence.

What an apocalypse of the
world within me!

Truth ever was and will be
commendable.

DE MUSSET.

Combien de chordes!
Un voile mystérieux qui
couvre les plus petites cir-
constances.

L'immobile Panthéon.

Ce qui *lui* parut être la moitié
d'une pièce de monnaie.

C'était l'Apocalypse que
j'avais au dedans de moi.

La vérité aura toujours son
mérite, *car elle est rare.*

So it seems. It is to be lamented that De Quincey himself never had the opportunity of admiring these *novas frondes et non sua poma*. Momentous as his first vial of opium had been to him, he would have been astonished to learn that in imbibing it he had swallowed all the vials of the Apocalypse.

The Opium-Eater has been introduced to the French public by another man of genius—Charles Baudelaire, the latter part of whose “Paradis Artificiels” is little else than an abridgment of it and the “Suspria de Profundis.” The fact is fully acknowledged, and Baudelaire’s recast deserves to rank among the best of his literary labours, both for the spirit and fidelity with which the substance of De Quincey’s narrative is reproduced, and the acuteness and geniality of the abbreviator’s interspersed criticisms. With wide differences,

the two writers had much in common. Baudelaire's translation is in general excellent. In one place he has made a slip,—not in rendering De Quincey. Having omitted to refer to the context of "Paradise Lost," he translates the sublime line quoted at the end of the Opium-Eater,

"With dreadful faces thronged, and fiery arms "
by

"Encombrés de faces menaçantes et de *bras* flamboyants."

*NOTES OF CONVERSATIONS
WITH THOMAS DE QUINCEY.
BY RICHARD WOODHOUSE.*

*NOTES OF CONVERSATIONS WITH
THOMAS DE QUINCEY.*

- • • *Sept.* 28, 1821. The Opium-Eater was formerly (indeed he is still) a great admirer of Wordsworth. So much was he so, that he could not even bring himself to mention his name in Oxford, for fear of having to encounter ridiculous observations or jeering abuse of his favourite, who was laughed at by most of the Oxonians. Of this he felt himself so impatient that he forbore even to speak upon the subject.

Meeting one time with Charles Lamb, who he understood had praised Wordsworth's poetry, he was induced to mention that poet's name, and to speak of him in high terms. Lamb gave him praise, but rather more qualified than the Opium-Eater expected, who spoke with much warmth on the subject, and complained that Lamb did not do Wordsworth justice ; upon which Lamb, in his dry, facetious way, observed, " If we are

to talk in this strain, we ought to have said grace before we began our conversation." This observation so annoyed the Opium-Eater that he instantly left the room, and has never seen Lamb since.

"This anecdote the Opium-Eater told me," said Hessey, "himself, along with some others of a similar tenor, in exemplification of points in his own character. He told it with much humour, and was quite sensible how ridiculous his conduct was; and he will be glad to see Lamb again, who he supposes must have long since forgotten or forgiven the circumstance." , ,

On Wednesday the 28th, and Thursday, 29th October, 1821, I passed the evenings at Taylor and Hessey's, in company with the author of the "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater," published in Nos. 21 and 22 of the "London Magazine." I had formed to myself the idea of a tall, thin, pale, gentlemanly-looking, courtier-like man; but I met a short, sallow-looking person, of a very peculiar cast of countenance, and apparently much an invalid. His demeanour was very gentle, modest, and unassuming; and his conversation fully came up to the idea I had formed of what would be that of the writer of those articles. He seems well acquainted with many of the literary men of the present day. He has

for some time past lived near Wordsworth in Westmoreland, near Grasmere, where he had met with Southey, Wilson, and the Edinburgh men. He knew Sir Walter Scott, Lockhart, and the majority of the "Blackwood" writers. I learned from him that he was for some time at Morgan's school in Bath, where I had been about two years after he left it, and that Morgan was the "ripe" scholar he alluded to in his Confessions. He was a day-boarder there; he was at first under Wilkins, the under-master (who now has the school), but he used always to show his Latin verse exercises up to Morgan with the two upper classes. He says he has often observed Morgan pointing him out with his cane to the boys in his upper classes, particularly when they brought up their verses to him, and the larger boys would threaten him and compel him to do their exercises for them.

From Morgan's he was removed to the Rev. Mr. Spencer's, at Winkfield, near Bath, where two of my brothers went. He found a great difference between the two masters. Being one of the head boys in this latter school, he found he could do pretty much as he pleased. He with some of the others at that school set up a periodical work, as it may be termed, in conjunction with one of Mr. Spencer's daughters.

They each furnished in turn written essays or disquisitions. Of these they collected about eighty, "some of which," said the Opium-Eater, "I met with among my papers within the last three months." It was from this school that he took his departure so unceremoniously. He is now thirty-six years of age. His constitution is much shattered. He has reduced his daily potion of laudanum from 8000 to about 80 drops, but he occasionally takes more, and whenever he is obliged to do this for any length of time the consequence is a great irritation in his stomach—he feels there an itching which he is obliged to bear, and unable by any means to allay. This is accompanied by a tendency in his stomach to turn everything to acid, and no alkaline medicine has any effect upon this. The only medicine that reaches this disorder is that prescribed by the surgeon he alluded to in his Confessions. He says this sensation of itching is so dreadful that if it were to last much longer than it usually does (about eight or ten hours), it would drive him out of his mind.

The Opium-Eater appears to have read a great deal, and to have thought much more. I was astonished at the depth and *reality*, if I may so call it, of his knowledge. He seems to have passed nothing that occurred in the course of

his study unreflected on or unremembered. His conversation appeared like the elaboration of a mine of results ; and if at any time a general observation of his became matter of question or ulterior disquisition it was found that he had ready his reasons at a moment's notice ; so that it was clear that his opinions were the fruits of his own reflections on what had come before him, and had not been taken up from others. Indeed, this last clearly appeared, since upon most of the topics that arose he was able to give a very satisfactory account, not merely of *what books* had been written upon those subjects, but of *what opinions* had been entertained upon them, together with his own judgments of those opinions, his acquiescence in them, or qualifications of them. Upon almost every subject that was introduced he had not only that general information which is easily picked up in literary society or from books, but that minute and accurate acquaintance with the details that can be acquired only from personal investigation of a subject and reflection upon it at the same time. Taylor led him into political economy, into the Greek and Latin accents, into antiquities, Roman roads, old castles, the origin and analogy of languages ; upon all these he was informed to considerable minuteness. The same with regard

to Shakespeare's sonnets, Spenser's minor poems, and the great writers and characters of Elizabeth's age and those of Cromwell's time. His judgments of books, of writers, of politics, were particularly satisfactory and sound. He is a slight Danish scholar, a moderate Italian, a good Frenchman, except as to pronunciation, and it seemed to me an excellent German scholar. He spoke of writing German articles and translations for the "London Magazine." He had an immense fund of literary anecdotes respecting the living writers. He had, he said, conducted a journal in the North ("The Westmoreland Gazette"). It was set up with a view of supporting the Lowther interest. "But," said he, "I so managed it as to preserve my independence, and it happened that during the year and a half that I was the conductor of the paper, the name of Lowther was scarcely ever mentioned in the leading articles". . .

November 3rd, 1821. This evening also I passed in his company, and had fresh reason to admire the variety and extent of his acquisitions in the different branches of knowledge, and the soundness of his judgments. I was also pleased with the candour with which he confessed his unacquaintance with different subjects, at the same time showing by his remarks that he had

very good general knowledge of the outlines of them, and of the groundworks on which they were erected. He has gone very deep in the German metaphysics, and particularly studied Kant's works. He is well acquainted with Coleridge, and they have in a great measure pursued the same studies. But he observed that Coleridge had mixed up his own fancies and mysticalities so much with the Kantian philosophy, that it was difficult for him (the Opium-Eater) to judge of the exact extent of Coleridge's acquaintance with Kant's system. He thinks very meanly of Dugald Stewart, who has no originality or grasp of mind in him, who constantly misunderstands and misquotes writers from taking their opinions at second-hand from others, and then falling foul of them. He has taken the account of Kant, as well as some passages of rank nonsense cited as Kant's, from a French writer whom he quotes and praises much in his introductory dissertation prefixed to one part of the "*Encyclopædia Britannica Supplement*" (Degerando). All Dugald Stewart's disquisitions are little, and the subject of them of no moment, even if true. He is thought little of at Edinburgh, or on the Continent. In the latter the only consideration he meets with is from his talent as a writer on polite literature.

The Mr. A. is Mr. Addington, brother of Hiley Addington, in the Opium-Eater's Confessions mentioned as an opium-eater.

The Opium-Eater entered himself some time back at the Middle Temple, with the view of being called to the bar, but he did not keep many terms.

On the subject of reading poetry, he observed that Wilson's character of countenance is generally very lively, but this leaves him the moment he begins to read poetry; his face then assumes a conventicle appearance, and his voice a methodistical drawl that is quite distressing. Southey mouths it out like a wolf howling. Coleridge lengthens the vowels and reads so monotonously, slowly, and abstractedly, that you can scarce make out what he says, and you lose the rhythm. Wordsworth sometimes reads very well.

It seems to me, from the manner in which the Opium-Eater recited a few lines occasionally which he had occasion to quote, that the reading upon which in his Confessions he piques himself would scarcely appear good to most people. He reads with too inward a voice; he dwells much upon the long vowels (this he does in his conversation, which makes it resemble more a speech delivered in a debating society than the varitinous discourse usually held among friends);

he ekes out particular syllables, has generally much appearance of intensity, and, in short, removes his tone and manner rather too much from the mode of common language. Hence I could not always catch the words in his quotations, and though one acquainted with the quotation beforehand would relish it the more from having an opportunity afforded of dwelling upon it, and from hearing the most made of those particular parts for the sake of which it is brought forward, yet general hearers would be left far behind, and in a state of wonder at the quoter. I learned from him that he has several works in hand. He is about to write a few notes to Taylor's pamphlet, for which purpose he is to have my interleaved copy. He is to write for the "London Magazine" an introduction to some English hexameters which he has composed; he is to write on the mode of reading Latin; on Kant's philosophy; on Coleridge's literary character; on Richter; to translate and abridge some tales from the German; to translate from the same an introduction to the weather observations and meteorological tables; to sketch out a closing address to the volume of the "London Magazine," ending December next, and give No. 3 of the Opium-Eater's Confessions for the February number; to write a series of letters to a

young man of talent whose education had been neglected; to write on political economy. . . .

The anecdote told by Hazlitt in the "London Magazine," vol. 3, is true. Wordsworth was the person, and Mrs. Lloyd was the friend at whose house he snuffed out one of the candles. The rest of the story, respecting the order to the servant when the nobleman dined with Wordsworth, is a fabrication for the sake of effect. The Opium-Eater, to whom Lloyd told it, knowing from the character of Wordsworth that it could not be true, cross-examined Lloyd and ascertained its incorrectness. Wordsworth would, in fact, scorn to be thought to interfere with the domestic management of his establishment, and would despise any man who should do so. He would rather be thought, if possible, not to know there was such a thing. Lloyd is the author of some novels: in one of these he gives a picture of Coleridge (under the title of Edmund Oliver). His novels are all full of excessive sentimentality, or rather sensitiveness—this indeed is his character. He has been insane, and his insanity originated from his extreme and intense nervousness. He is quite harmless on those occasions. He made his escape from the retreat or the asylum, near York, and wandered about the country. The Opium-Eater once met him in Westmore-

land when under one of these fits. They walked along for some time together ; at length, in one of the loveliest and wildest spots, near one of the most retired and wild of the lakes, Lloyd suddenly stopped, and in great agitation asked the Opium-Eater if he knew who he was. "I dare say," he continued, "you think you know me ; but you do not, and you cannot. I am the author of all evil ; Sir, I am the Devil. By what inscrutable decree of Providence it is that I was foredoomed from all eternity to be this malevolent being, I cannot tell." He then cast his eyes upwards to Heaven, and remained silent for a short time. "I know," he then said, "you will not believe me, but it is of no consequence: I feel satisfied that it is so." "I said to him," said the Opium-Eater, "I certainly had thought differently, and still did, but it would be more satisfactory to me to hear what his reasons were. He then said, 'I know who you are ; you are nobody, a nonentity; you have no being. You will not agree with me, and you will attempt to argue with me, and thus to prove that you do exist ; but it is not so, you do not exist at all. It is merely appearance, and not reality. There is, and there can be, but one other real being besides myself.' He then," said the Opium-Eater, "entered into a variety of arguments to convince me he was what he pretended.

This was what I wanted. I had set his understanding at work. He reasoned and reasoned, and became more himself and more cheerful, and the fancy wore away by degrees."

"He is," said the Opium-Eater, "the very worst possible writer, though a man of talent in a particular way, in every style except one—that of a sort of Rousseauish feeling and sentiment. His novels are full of it." Taylor mentioned that he had had some MS. novels in verse of his, which were all of that class, and would not do for the magazine, for which purpose they were offered. . . .

The Opium-Eater mentioned that when he called upon Murray in town, the latter had spoken to him of "your patron, Lord Lowther." "Now," said the Opium-Eater, "the word patron is a favourite word with me, from its association with those high and noble instances of patronage, about the age of Elizabeth, when great men took a pride and pleasure in fostering ability, and lending their names and protection to authors. This patronage was without humiliation or servility; each party felt that he was receiving as well as conferring a benefit. The poet, in return for present countenance and favours, had it in his power to transmit his patron's name down with honour to posterity. He made a sort of glory of this mutual obligation, and the praise that he

gave, though somewhat excessive, was the poetic garb in which he decked the expression of his own excited feelings. It was the illumination which genius and enthusiasm always throw round their subject. At the same time that they thus made their offerings or expressed their gratitude to their noble friends, they did not scruple to tell them that those offerings and those thanks would be the means by which their names and characters would be handed down to future times. Shakespeare's sonnets to his patron are full of these vaunts of conscious genius.

'And thou *in this* shalt find thy monument,
When tyrant's tombs and crests of brass are spent.'

'Thy monument shall be my gentle verse,' etc.

'Yet be most proud of that which I compile.'

And others to the same purport; Spenser and Ben Jonson the same.

"These addresses were grand and noble; they carried in themselves an excuse for their flattery. They had a redeeming power about them which causes them to be better and better liked the further the reader is removed from the actual time of their composition. They were very different from the gross and excessive adulation of the wits of Anne's days. Dryden's dedications are artful, elaborate, and energetic,

but fulsome; there is no heart in them. The writer knew they were untrue when he wrote them; he wrote them for gain or its equivalent, and they have about them, and suggest to the reader, the idea of insincerity and outrageous exaggeration. This style could not continue; Dryden had carried it to its utmost extent, and it ceased after him. The dedicators of the next age rather insinuated than expressly assigned to those they addressed the virtues and perfections incident to humanity. But the same insincerity is apparent to the reader. The approved forms ran thus: 'If it was not notorious how averse your lordship is to have those qualities in which you far surpass not only your contemporaries, but also the greatest men of antiquity, made known to the world, I should consider myself blamable if in this address I were to pass over that nobility, etc., etc.'

"Even Addison has too much of this in the prefaces to his 'Spectators.' But I was about to observe that, whether for this, or some other reason, the word patron has fallen into unrepute. And though I was convinced that Mr. Murray had no intention to offend me, yet I was satisfied that he did not use the word in its best, and if I may so say, its *Elizabethan* sense—and I felt that the use of it to any one at this day in the

manner in which Mr. Murray used it, was, to say the least, unthinking. But Mr. Murray is quite a man of the world, and has a different behaviour for everyone, according to the idea he has of the relative importance to himself of the party. And I should imagine that the kind of reception one meets with from Murray would be a tolerably correct indication of the estimation in which one stands with people of a certain description with whom Mr. Murray is connected. His behaviour towards me was quite different from what it had been in Westmoreland, when he pressed me for an article, and insisted that I should never come to town without calling upon him, and enlarged upon the pleasure he should have to see me. *But three hundred miles makes a great difference in some people."*

The Opium-Eater here went into an account of his connection with the paper set up by the Lowthers, which I have already briefly noticed, to show how little he was of a client (to use an Horatian expression) of Lord Lowther; whom, indeed, he had never seen above twice, and then at election dinners.

The above anecdote I have set down, with the disquisition on patronage connected with it, in the first person, because, though not the very

language of the narrator, it contains the substance of what he said, and is given somewhat in his manner, and in the order in which he gave it; and it will afford some idea of the general tenor of his conversation, and of the richness of his mind, and of the facility with which he brings in the stores of his reading and reflection to bear upon the ordinary topics of conversation. But it can convey no adequate impression of the eloquence and scope of his language. The subject was incidentally introduced by something said of the "Quarterly Review;" the incident had occurred some time back, and the whole thing, though it assumes from its air and coherence the character of a preconceived show-off, was quite *ex improviso*. That it was really so will be evident at once to those who are in the habit of associating with him, and of hearing him, as it were, overlay every little topic with rich discussion and valuable information and reflection thrown in *quasi ex abundantia*.

Reynolds when in fine cue, and amongst friends, is equally ready and lavish in his wit, sporting it extempore on every subject, and with astonishing good-humour and freedom from acrimony or personality.

23rd November, 1821. I dined at Taylor's

with Dr. Darling, Percival, and the Opium-Eater. In the course of the evening the latter mentioned that the person he alludes to in his Confessions as far exceeding himself in the quantity of opium taken is Coleridge. The Opium-Eater was speaking to a surgeon in the north, a neighbour of Coleridge's, who supplied Coleridge with laudanum, and who, upon a calculation made as to the quantity consumed by Coleridge, found it to amount to 80,000 drops per day. The first time Coleridge went to the house of this surgeon, he was not at home, but his wife supplied Coleridge, and she saw him at once fill out a large wineglassful and drink it off. She was astonished, and in much alarm explained to him what the medicine was, as she imagined he had made a mistake. Very soon afterwards he drank off another glassful, and before he left the house he had emptied a half-pint bottle in addition.

The Opium-Eater said that he himself once, at the time when he was taking 8,000 drops per day, but when he was not in the habit of measuring what he took, was in some danger from the quantity he had taken. He had been sitting for some time engaged in reading, and had been helping himself to laudanum, almost unconsciously, and without reflecting how much

he was taking, when he suddenly found himself dizzy and heavy, and very much inclined to sleep; he also perceived, as it were, the fumes rising to his brain. He exerted himself to get up and walk about: for if he had remained quiet, in one minute he should have fallen asleep in his chair. He then took an emetic and brought off much of what he had taken, and thus rescued himself from the danger. . . .

The house in which the Opium-Eater lived, as mentioned in his Confessions, rent free, and which is in a street leading out of Oxford Street, is in Greek Street, and the house is the corner house in that street, partly in the square, on the right hand as you go down from Oxford Street. The master had other offices elsewhere at which he carried on his game. He went by several names.

The Opium-Eater tells a curious tale of his practices upon a foolish butcher who fancied he had a literary talent, and whose intellectual abilities his landlord for his own ends flattered in a most fulsome way, but so as nearly to turn the poor butcher's brain with vanity.

Sir William Jones was a man of much talent; but he cannot be called a man of genius, for he wanted passion to attach him to one particular pursuit; instead of which he was studying all

subjects for a season in turn, and so he was never great in any one.

2nd December, 1821. I dined at Dewint's with Taylor, Cunningham, and the Opium-Eater; a Mr. Wilson, a Catholic gentleman and an antiquary, came in after dinner. Cunningham mentioned that a report had been spread in the north that Bloomfield had sustained considerable loss by the failure of Vernor and Hood. Taylor thought the rumour was entirely without foundation. Cunningham observed that Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, had set about a similar story respecting his own losses by the failure of a bookseller at Edinburgh, named Gibson, who had published for him. Gibson happened to hear the report; and when he went to Edinburgh and had traced the rumour to Hogg, he, to Hogg's great surprise, made his appearance, and demanded of Hogg his reason for such a misrepresentation. Hogg, with much candour, answered, "Ah, sir, I thought you were *dead*."

Cunningham spoke of Hogg as having much energy and animation in his manner, considerable self-possession, and a very ready knack at answering.

When Wilkie showed Hogg some of his pictures, the latter looked over them one by one,

and when it was apparent that he was expected to say something, he looked first at the works and then at the painter several times, as though comparing them together, and then said, "It's *weel* you're so young a man." The expression bore two constructions. Wilkie took it as a compliment, and bowed.

The Opium-Eater, in the course of a conversation on versifying, and the sort of compensation in poetical melody which requires a heavy or spondaic line after a dactylic or lighter one, noticed Milton's excellence in that respect, and quoted different passages in proof, among which were the following :—

Thence to the famous orators repair,
Those ancient, whose resistless eloquence,
Wielded at will that fierce Democratic,
Shook th' arsenal, and fulminated over Greece
To Macedon, and Artaxerxes' throne.

(P. R. 4, l. 267.)

Oxford and classical learning, and the general ability of University men next came on the carpet ; when the Opium-Eater mentioned with surprise, as though it was a sort of stigma upon the University, that a man like Copleston who had so little in him, and had done so little to distinguish himself, should be thought so

much of, and be so quoted with pride by Oxonians as an honour to the University. "It seems," he said, "to be a virtual condemnation by themselves of their University ; for if *he* be the highest, what must the lowest be ; and what must be the general standard !" The Opium-Eater was himself of Oxford. . . .

He then mentioned having had a presentiment, on leaving his residence on a visit to London some time back, that he should never again see a little child of Wordsworth's, who was afflicted and had but the use of one of its sides. It was a sweet little girl, about three years old, and the Opium-Eater was much attached to it. One night, while he was here, he heard a dog howling dismally at his door, in the evening : it howled three times, and the Opium-Eater with some curiosity waited to hear a fourth howl, but in vain ; the dog passed on and was silent. This happened on some particular day, either Christmas or New Year's Eve (which was named by him to Taylor), and he noticed the time particularly. The effect was so vivid upon the Opium-Eater's sensations that he at once began to consider which of all the persons he knew and loved might most probably be in trouble or dying at that time ; and he thought that this little child was the most likely one of

whom he might expect to receive ill news. He waited with some anxiety for the post on the day on which intimation of anything that might have occurred at home at the period he had noted would reach him in due course. He listened to the postman and heard him in the street, but he passed by his door without knocking. However, in the course of the day he received by the second post a letter sealed with black wax. It was from Miss Wordsworth (Wordsworth's sister), who, knowing how partial he had been to the child, had written to him to apprise him of its death. . . .

6th December, 1821. I dined at Taylor and Hessey's this day, in company with the Opium-Eater, Reynolds, Lamb, Cunningham, Rice, Hood, Wainwright, and Talfourd. About one o'clock I accompanied the Opium-Eater home: we knocked several times, but no one answered the door, and he accepted my proposition of spending the night in my chambers. We accordingly returned to the Temple, and lighted a fire. The night passed away rapidly in most interesting conversation, and at eight in the morning I saw him home. In the course of the night he expressed a desire to try the effect of tobacco upon his stomach, for he observed he had been lately indisposed, so much so that he found him-

self obliged to increase his dose of laudanum to 200 drops per day, yet that day he had taken but 100 in the morning, but had omitted to take the like quantity as usual about four o'clock in the afternoon. The consequence was, that his stomach had been painful all the evening, and he thought this a fair opportunity for making the experiment. He smoked half a cigar, until he felt his head slightly dizzy; but this soon went off, and he observed in about half an hour after that the smoking had quieted the irritation in his stomach. He smoked the half of another in the course of the night; and he seemed to think it not unlikely that he might be able to substitute in a great measure the use of tobacco for that of opium.

The evening at Taylor's had passed very pleasantly to all but the Opium-Eater. Lamb, Rice, and Reynolds were particularly lively and facetious; jokes were lavished sufficient to furnish a new Joe Miller.—“Mr. Lamb,” said John Taylor, “I shall be happy to take wine with you. Is that the hock you have before you?” “Hoc est,” said Lamb. Lamb on a former evening had overthrown his glass by accident. “Never mind,” said Taylor, “it is soon replaced.” “Ah!” said Lamb, shaking his head, “*oc-cidit!*”

Lamb, observing the Opium-Eater to be very

still, began a sort of playful attack upon him by way of rousing him, and desired he would, as he knew of old he could, be entertaining and facetious ; he also added something in a jeering but good-humoured way about Oxford Street. The Opium-Eater seemed very unhappy at this, and assured Lamb and the company that he was far from well, and it was totally out of his power at that moment to enter into the conversation, and he hoped they would not take it ill that he sat silent. After Lamb and the rest were gone, the Opium-Eater said to Taylor, Hessey, and myself, which he repeated when he arrived at my chambers, that he had felt it out of his power through indisposition to take part in what had been going forward, and he hoped none of those who had left them would attribute it to an improper motive. He added, that if he *had* been in good health, he could not have entered into conversation on any subject connected with his opium-eating confessions, after the manner and tone of levity and half-jeering in which Lamb had made allusion to them. "There are," said he, "certain places and events and circumstances which have been mixed up or connected with parts of my life which have been very unfortunate, and these, from constant meditation and reflection upon them, have ob-

tained with me a sort of sacredness, and become associated with solemn feelings, so that I cannot bear without the greatest mental agony to advert to the subject, or to hear it adverted to by others in any tone of levity or witticism. It seems to me a sort of desecration and unhallowing analogous to the profanation of a temple, when the subjects are approached in conversation by any one unless in a feeling of sympathy and seriousness, and I would rather suffer the most excruciating bodily pains than the shock my whole nature feels at hearing these topics discussed in a ludicrous manner or made the ground of raillery."

Speaking of the characters of minds of different people, and indeed of various whole classes, he took notice that he considered the minds of the people in his own neighbourhood as being particularly gross and uncharitable. That they were fond of retailing anecdotes, however horrible, as true, without ever taking the trouble to ascertain their foundation, or caring at all whether they were true or not. This he attributes to the want of novelty and stimulus operating upon the vacant and inactive minds of people having no worldly cares to occupy them, rather than to any inherent maliciousness. The worst was that these tales, though they always cease to be current when any newer scandal is im-

ported to supply their place, are yet liable at any time to be recalled from their temporary oblivion, and indeed are so; and they often acquire more effect in their revived state than they had originally; for at that time, though all repeated them, yet they were recent, and easily proved if true, and the very circumstance that every one had the same story, yet no one could vouch it, or personally knew anything of it, satisfied all the world that there was nothing in it. Yet when a story was revived, it was always mentioned with an "on dit," and as having been well known and the common talk at the time it happened, so that the rumour had thus more chance of meeting belief than when it was first sent abroad, and "the last state of the lie is worse than the first." The Opium-Eater mentioned several stories, entirely groundless, and carrying in their very horror an assurance of their falsehood and absurdity. • • •

8th December, 1821. The Opium-Eater was reading at Taylor's the notice in the "Literary Gazette" of Keats, introduced into a critique upon Shelley's "Adonais," a poem on the death of Keats, and he expressed in the strongest terms his execration of such a rascally and villainous assault upon the memory of anyone scarcely yet cold in his tomb. • • •

The Opium-Eater mentioned that Wilson had sent him Shelley's "Revolt of Islam," with a request that he would write a review of it for "Blackwood's Magazine." This the Opium-Eater would not do, but he read it, and was surprised to find in it more ability of a particular sort than he expected, or indeed than he had conceived Shelley, whom he knew, and who had been his neighbour in the Lakes, to possess. He returned Wilson the book, with a letter stating his judgment of the work, and very soon there appeared a flaming article by Wilson in the magazine praising the book very highly. . . . "Evelyn's Memoirs"—a weak, good-for-little book, which has been unaccountably much praised by weak people, and the praise thus lavished has been repeated over and over again by persons who take all their opinions upon trust. He was a shallow, empty, cowardly, vain, assuming coxcomb. It is not endurable to hear such a prig of a fellow, who ran away from England at the very time of danger, and remained in Italy looking at pictures and collecting butterflies during the time the war was going on, and who came back the moment all the fighting was over and the business done, abusing the fine spirits who died in the popular cause as rebels, etc. He was a mere literary

fribble, a fop and a smatterer affecting natural history and polite learning, and yet his stupid memoirs are praised to the very echo. They are useful as now and then enabling one to fix the date of a particular event, but for little besides. The mind of a man is very generally seen in the use he makes of a journal. Evelyn's is very meagre and bad. You meet, for instance, with such matters recorded as that he dined with *this* person of quality, or called upon or was visited by *that* man of distinction, *without more*. Nothing that the party said in conversation is noted; nothing is stated as arising out of, or depending upon, the visit; the purpose of setting the circumstance down at all seems to be merely to give an idea of the consequence which the writer imagines himself to derive from being considered an acquaintance of such men.

Taylor read a part of a letter from Clare, to whom he had lately sent Wordsworth's poems, in which he says: "I like Wordsworth better than Crabbe. I can read the one a second time over with added pleasure, but I am disgusted with the other after it has been once read. Still Wordsworth's nursery ballads inspire me with an uncontrollable itch of parodying them; I did ease myself by burlesquing one, which you shall have in my next." The Opium-Eater wondered

that he should think of comparing Wordsworth and Crabbe together, who had not one thing in common in their writings. Wordsworth sought to hallow and ennoble every subject on which he touched, while Crabbe was anything but a poet. His pretensions to poetry were not nothing merely, but if they were to be represented algebraically, the negative sign must be prefixed. All his labours and endeavours were unpoetical. Instead of raising and elevating his subjects, he did all he could to make them flat and commonplace, to disrobe them of the garb in which imagination would clothe them, and to bring them down as low as, or even to debase them lower than, the standard of common life. Poetry could no longer exist if cultivated only by such writers as Crabbe. Wordsworth's aim is entirely the reverse of this : as to him Clare seemed to fall into the general error, that he wrote on subjects only fit for the nursery, and that his thoughts and language were low and vulgar. "Now," says the Opium-Eater, "I will not take upon me generally to assert that no single low thought or expression occurs ; but I will say that I do not recollect any instance ; and that most of the passages usually quoted as instances of this, are themselves proofs of the direct contrary. And the objection is generally made by persons of

common, low minds, who have not wisdom to perceive or sympathy to feel the depth of his thoughts. He is accused of being too simple, when in fact he is too wise and too abstruse for them. He is thought to skim the surface while in truth he goes very deeply into the elements of our nature, too far indeed for many to follow him. People in general do not sufficiently attend to the principles upon which they act; and Wordsworth's apparent simplicity arises in a great degree from his acquaintance with the depths of the human heart and the secret springs that regulate and influence human feelings, thoughts, and actions. Thousands of persons will object to passages in Wordsworth because they do not understand the principles on which they themselves act, and on a knowledge of which the passage in question will depend, yet the same people will speak and act in other matters, though they do not themselves know it, upon the very same principle in the human mind upon which depends the expression they object to: and this may be proved to demonstration in various instances of their daily and hourly conduct. How many object to the simple and affecting ballad of the child at the tomb of its brother saying: 'Nay, we are seven.' Yet how deep must a man have gone below the thoughts of

the generality, before he could have written such a ballad ! It contains the height of the moral sublime. Others dislike the description of the oxen, 'forty feeding like one.' Yet it seems most appropriately to convey the idea of the sameness and the continuity of employment of the whole herd. The ballad of the female beggar too, has been called foolish.

She had a tall man's height or more,
No bonnet screened her from the heat,
A long drab-coloured cloak she wore,
A mantle reaching to her feet.
What other dress she had I could not know,
Only she wore a cap that was as white as snow.

In all my walks thro' field or town,
Such figure had I never seen :
Her face was of Egyptian brown ;
Fit person was she for a queen,
*To head those antient Amazonian files,
Or ruling bandit's wife among the Grecian isles.*

The last two lines are particularly grand and majestic." Taylor then noticed that "what other dress she had I could not know," was a botch ; it was unnecessary, and set the reader's fancy rambling upon a point no ways material. The Opium-Eater admitted this, and observed that Wordsworth had a great difficulty in rhyming,

and this obliged him many times to insert needless expletive words and sentences. Taylor thought that it was not so much the simplicity of the language as the lowness of the thought and the want of selection in the subjects that led people to depreciate Wordsworth's merit. The Opium-Eater upon this observed that the principal complaints he had heard made against Wordsworth were that his style was mean and low, and this reminded him of an observation which had occurred to him upon the subject of *style*, which he believed had never before been remarked in any book, nor indeed did he observe any indication of its even having been noticed, save from one German word which seemed to point at the distinction. It had been supposed that thoughts and words had some necessary, immediate, and close correlation to each other; that words were the mere types and impressions of thoughts; that the one were the pictures of the other; and indeed it had been said that if a person has thoughts, he also has necessarily suitable and commensurate expressions for those thoughts given him at the same time, and may at once and without difficulty give utterance to his ideas in words. This seemed to the Opium-Eater not strictly correct; he thought the phraseology, "That words are the *dress* in which

thoughts appear," expressed the truth much more nearly than saying or implying that words expressed the actual thoughts themselves. He intended to touch upon and illustrate this subject in the first of the series of letters he was about to write for the "London Magazine," and which would begin with the subject of composition. It seemed to him that independently of the expression in which a thought was clothed, and as the substratum or groundwork supporting such expression, there would be found, upon analysis and separation of the different accidentalities of the idea, a simple plain and abstract thought, feeling, or conception ; that such thoughts, etc., were common to all men, but some did and some did not notice, cultivate, encourage, and express them. And the mode in which abstract thought was dressed up, the expression, figure, trope, or instance which was brought forward as representing, or rather expounding it to others, was an essentially different thing from the thought itself. A good thought might be very ill expressed. On the other hand, a poor or weak conception might be so adorned by the rich garb or exponential dress or image in which it was conveyed, that it should appear attractive, and its emptiness might thus escape unnoticed. This distinction between thought and the garb in which it was

presented was not sufficiently attended to. The general complaint made against Wordsworth's poetry was that its style was low and mean, brought from the vulgar ranks of life, and deficient in interest, and childish. Now it might be safely affirmed of Wordsworth's phraseology that it is anything but mean—there is scarcely a mean word that occurs in it. It is true that he often uses words in their original and intense sense, where in common use they have a slighter signification; as in the instance of the word *trouble*, in where it is employed in its original and scriptural sense for great tribulation or anxiety, and not, as in common conversation, for a lighter or more transient inquietude, or slight molestation. But generally, although his subject lead him to treat of the inferior ranks of life, and to make those who walk in them speak in their own peculiar manner and course of thought and sentiment, yet he never admits their colloquialisms, bad English, or vulgarities. Their diction is simple, but pure and sensible, so that, so far as Wordsworth's style, properly so called, is concerned, his detractors are entirely in the wrong. Their complaint is then, in point of fact, though they may not know it, against his *thoughts*, not their garb. The former of these is majestic, grand and

only to be properly appreciated by kindred spirits to his own. . .

At this part of the conversation (for on leaving Taylor it was continued while I walked home with the Opium-Eater), we had arrived at his lodging, where I took leave of him about twelve o'clock. He had, however, said nearly the whole of what he had to observe upon this interesting subject. I should not omit to notice that the Opium-Eater found throughout the whole of French literature an universal weakness and poverty of thought, and that when the French writers wished to be more than usually grand, they loaded their thoughts with glittering and tinsel expressions, but their conceptions are poor, low, and imbecile. He inquired whether Taylor knew if "B ——" in Dryden's "Satires of Mac-Flecknoe" meant Burnet the historian of his own times—for the character there given was singularly applicable to Burnet. The Opium-Eater had mentioned to me a short time since his astonishment at the high opinion which seemed to be entertained generally of Burns. He allowed him ability of a particular description, some fancy, much power of catching and expressing generous sentiments in free and easy language, but nothing that could entitle him to rank high as a great poet. His "Mary in Heaven" was false in senti-

ment, and very commonplace and factitious. His "Cotter's Saturday Night" had nothing of the high poet in it, and the subject was suggested by a poem of Fergusson's, the thoughts in it were common to most persons, and there was nothing great in the manner of treating them. His "Tam o' Shanter" was one of his best works, but that has been greatly over-praised. , , ,

28th December, 1821. The Opium-Eater was asked by Taylor about his college and Oxford, and whether he had taken a degree there. He said that he had not, and the circumstances were rather peculiar ; and, as reports contrary to the real state of the case had got abroad, he would state the transactions exactly as they occurred. The college to which he went was Worcester College. At that time it was in very bad repute. There were no very good tutors, and the young men there were generally low in point of attainment, and very free and irregular in their habits owing to the lax discipline that prevailed. As soon as the Opium-Eater arrived there, he was invited by many of the men of his own standing to their parties, which he joined, but he found them to be a drinking, rattling set, whose conversation was juvenile, commonplace, and quite unintellectual. He invited them once or twice in return, and then dropped the intercourse,

and in a short time he came to be looked upon as a strange being who associated with no one, and he was left to himself, and to do in fact just as he pleased. Upon some occasion it was necessary that a declamation should be written and delivered in Latin by some one of his college, and it fell to him to do it. He accordingly composed and delivered the oration, and as he had written it with some care, and was a tolerable master of the language, it excited considerable attention. These things were generally passed by without much notice ; but he could perceive by the interest which was taken while he was declaiming, and by the buzzing and whispering, that it was much better than had been expected, and that it had caused some sensation in the auditors. Immediately many persons high in the University came up, shook him by the hand, and congratulated him. Soon after this he found himself noticed by the head of the college and several of the students ; he received invitations, and soon discovered that *all* the University men were not of the same description as those with whom he had at first associated. His tutor also paid much attention to him, and excited him to try for honours. This he refused to do. In fact, from what he saw of the examinations at Oxford, he looked upon them as so much a farce, and so

unfair a standard to try a person's general ability and proficiency, that he had determined not to attempt to gain distinction or even to take a degree, which to his mind could convey no honour worth seeking for. His intention at this time was to travel in Germany, and he should not have wished even to belong to the college, but because the name of having been of Oxford would have been of service and an introduction to him abroad as a scholar. His purpose was merely to matriculate and reside there for a time, but many persons incited him to try for honours. A friend of his (named Millar) offered also himself to try for honours, if the Opium-Eater would go up also with him, and his tutor (of the name of Jones) was particularly anxious that he should do so, thinking probably that it would be of great service to himself to have the credit of turning out two scholars from that college who should have distinguished themselves. It was his wish to serve his tutor that principally weighed with the Opium-Eater to consent. Another inducement was an order that had been just issued that the answers in the Greek examination should be given in Greek. Here there seemed something to be done. He determined instead of giving in any particular books, to give up Greek literature generally, and

he felt conscious of going through the examination triumphantly. He *read* (as it is termed) very hard for two months before the examination. But about a week before it was to take place the order for giving in the answers in the Greek examinations in that language was rescinded, and it was directed that they should be given in English. This completely destroyed all stimulus in the Opium-Eater's mind ; he no longer cared to go through an examination which would only show that he in common with others had acquired knowledge of a particular description, but would not leave him room to show his general proficiency. He thought of declining to go up, and it was only the earnest wishes of his friend Millar and his tutor that induced him so to do. He entertained a contempt for the general acquirements of his examiners, for the sort of examination to be gone through, and especially for that trickery in the examiners of trying students in some particularly difficult passages or points in which they would make themselves perfectly at home, without any attempt to ascertain the real ability of the person under examination in the language. He had, for instance, studied Aristotle's "*Organon*" throughout, and he meant to have given up that book in logic. He had had not merely to master the construction

of the language, and to understand the meaning of the author, but also, such was the condensation and depth of the matter, to think deeply and ponder over every passage, and almost every word, so as to imbue himself with the wisdom of the author. Now there was in use in Oxford a manual of Aristotle, and selection of parts of him, which was generally taken in the examination, and, as he was pretty confident that his examiners had never looked into the large work itself as he had done, he felt sure that though they would pretend to examine him from the large book, they would in fact confine themselves to such parts of it as were contained in this manual. Again, they would frequently put before the student particular parts of the Greek tragedians which were manifestly corrupt, or at best only to be made sense of by some strained interpretations of scholiasts and commentators. These he had never thought it worth his while to attend to. The *Agamemnon* of *Æschylus* was one of these, and he felt little doubt that he should have this put into his hands by the examiners. Had he been ever so well prepared in this respect the utmost his knowledge would have amounted to would be what a great number of people had written and conjectured upon the difficult passages. He

counted the lines of the play, and reckoned the number of minutes to the examination, and he found that there would not be time even to read the play itself properly through. This circumstance, and the thought of the possibility of failing, and in a matter of so little real importance, and which went so very little way as a fair trial of ability, yet more disinclined him to the examination.

The first day of the examination, which was merely in Latin, happened to be on a Saturday. It is the custom to take five or six persons a day. On the average they last two hours each person, but the examiners sometimes bestow more upon the examination of one and less upon that of others. The Opium-Eater underwent a very long examination. He was first put to translate Latin into English, and afterwards to render English at sight into Latin. And he could perceive from the whispers, the silence, and various other indications, that he was considered a proficient, and was likely to pass a splendid examination. This was intimated to him afterwards from various quarters. On Monday he was to be examined in Greek. But all his contempt for his examiners, his thought of the possibility of failing from the unfair mode of examination (as though a lover

of Shakespeare should be tried exclusively by his intimate acquaintance with the difficult and corrupt passages of the "Pericles" or "Titus Andronicus"), and the conviction that from the alteration in the language in which the answers in the Greek examinations were to be given, no opportunities of distinguishing himself was afforded, came upon him at once. On the Sunday morning he left Oxford, and has never been in the place since except upon one occasion for about half-an-hour. When the time came he was *non inventus*. Many different reports were abroad on the subject, which he had heard himself. A lady once archly said to him, "I have heard of such a thing, Mr. De Quincey, as a person's heart failing him."

Others said that he was disgusted at the mode of examination and the ignorance of the examiners, and that he declined honours because he felt that to undergo such examinations could confer no honour. "And this," observed Taylor, "is near the truth, and the matter may be left with this impression." "However," said the Opium-Eater, "I have stated exactly how the matter was, and my opinion of Oxford examinations is just as it used to be."—*Ex relat. J. T.*

29th December, 1821. This evening I saw

the Opium-Eater into the mail ; he was about to return to Westmoreland.

Allan Cunningham had gone off by another coach for the North the same evening. It was a subject of regret to both that they had not travelled together.

The Opium-Eater always disliked in modern composition what is termed Ciceronian Latin—that style in which twenty or thirty words are used to express what might be as well or better given in five or ten. The declamation he gave at Oxford was framed more after the style of Cæsar in his “Commentaries” than after that of Cicero. It was studiously clear, simple, and short ; and it was probably the novelty of avoiding all floridness in the composition that caused it to excite so much notice.

NOTES.

*NOTES ON "CONFESSIONS OF AN
ENGLISH OPIUM-EATER."*

P. 6. "'Not yet recorded,' I say : for there is one celebrated man of the present day [Coleridge] who, if all be true which is reported of him, has greatly exceeded me in quantity."—DE QUINCEY. In Woodhouse's notes of De Quincey's conversations, Coleridge is stated to have sometimes taken 80,000 drops, but this seems incredible ; though Cottle declares, "from an undoubted source," that he has been known to imbibe a quart of laudanum in the twenty-four hours. According to De Quincey's estimate in his note on page 104 of this edition, 80,000 drops would be equivalent to 800 teaspoonfuls.

P. 8. *Their work-people were rapidly getting into the practice of opium-eating.* There is a vivid passage in "Alton Locke" (vol. i., p. 183, first edition) on this practice in the Cambridgeshire fens :—

"'They as dinnot tak' spirits down thor, tak their pennord o' elevation, then—women-folk especial.'

"'What's elevation?'

"'Oh ! ho ! ho !—you goo into druggist's shop o'

market-day, into Cambridge, and you'll see the little boxes, doozens and doozens, a' ready on the counter ; and never a ven-man's wife goo by, but what calls in for her pennord o' elevation, to last her out the week. Oh ! ho ! ho ! Well, it keeps women-folk quiet, it do ; and it's mortal good agin ago pains.'

" ' But what is it ? '

" ' Opium, lor' alive, opium ! '

" ' But doesn't it ruin their health ? I should think it the very worst sort of drunkenness. '

" ' Ow, well, yow moi say that—mak them cruel thin, then, it do ; but what can bodies do i' th' ago ? ' "

P. 11. *The recent illustrious exception.* " A third exception might perhaps have been added : and my reason for not adding that exception is chiefly because it was only in his juvenile efforts that the writer to whom I allude expressly addressed himself to philosophical themes ; his riper powers having been all dedicated—on very excusable and intelligible grounds, under the present direction of the popular mind in England—to criticism and the fine arts. This reason apart, however, I doubt whether he is not rather to be considered an acute thinker than a subtle one. It is, besides, a great drawback on his mastery over philosophical subjects that he has obviously not had the advantage of a regular scholastic education : he has not read Plato in his youth, which most likely was only his misfortune ; but neither has he read Kant in his manhood, which is his fault."—DE QUINCEY. The writer intended is probably Hazlitt.

P. 12. "I disclaim any allusion to *existing* professors, of whom indeed I know only one" [Wilson]. —DE QUINCEY.

P. 13. *Left me to the care of four guardians.* In the revised edition of the Confessions it is explained that one of these was a merchant, another a rural magistrate, both too busy to discharge their trust; the third, the Rev. Samuel Hall, a worthy but dull clergyman, who did pay considerable attention to his ward's affairs, and whose resistance to De Quincey's wish to go to college drove him to run away from school as detailed subsequently. The fourth was "Mr. G., a banker in Lincolnshire, too generally prevented from interfering by his remoteness from the spot, but by much the ablest among them."—*Confessions*, ed. 1862, p. 30.

P. 14. *The practice of daily reading off the newspapers into the best Greek I could furnish extempore.* "Once, at the house of Mr. Commissioner Reeves, who had just introduced him [W. Sidney Walker] to Sir James Mackintosh, the former said, 'Our young poet, Sir James, can turn anything into Greek verse.' 'Indeed,' replied the baronet, 'what do you think of the Court Guide? It was done, but unfortunately not preserved.'"—*Remains of W. Sidney Walker*, p. 9.

P. 14. *He who honoured me with this eulogy was a scholar.* Mr. Morgan, of Bath Grammar School, De Quincey's first schoolmaster. "The blockhead in a perpetual panic," mentioned lower down, was Mr. Spencer, the master of a private school at Winkfield

in Wiltshire, where De Quincey was in 1799-1800. "The respectable scholar at the head of a great school on an ancient foundation," was Mr. Lawson, head-master of Manchester Grammar School, where De Quincey was sent in the hope of his gaining an exhibition at Brasenose College, and under whom he remained from the latter part of 1800 to July, 1802. The portrait of Mr. Lawson is much softened in the later recension of the Confessions.

P. 16. *A woman of high rank.* Lady Carbery. "A young woman some ten years older than myself, as remarkable for her intellectual pretensions as for her beauty and benevolence."—*Opium-Eater*, ed. 1862, p. 71. She had been an intimate friend of De Quincey's mother before her marriage to Lord Carbery, and, at the date he mentions, had for some time been corresponding with him on the study of the Greek Testament.

P. 20. *Nineteen years.* In the original edition *eighteen*, subsequently corrected. See preliminary "Notice to the Reader."

P. 20. *A picture of the lovely* —. "The house-keeper was in the habit of telling me that the lady had *lived* (meaning, perhaps, had been *born*) two centuries ago; that date would better agree with the tradition that the portrait was a copy from Vandyke. All that she knew further about the lady was, that either to the grammar school, or to that particular college at Oxford with which the school was connected, or else to that particular college at Oxford with which Mr. Lawson personally was connected, or else, fourthly, to

Mr. Lawson himself as a private individual, the unknown lady had been a special benefactress. She was also a special benefactress to me, through eighteen months, by means of her sweet Madonna countenance. And in some degree it serves to spiritualise and to hallow this service, that of her who unconsciously rendered it I know neither the name, nor the exact rank or age, nor the place where she lived and died. She was parted from me by perhaps two centuries; I from her by the gulf of eternity."—*Opium-Eater*, ed. 1862, pp. 92-3, note.

P. 23. *On other personal accounts.* He wished to introduce himself to Wordsworth, with some of whose poems he had lately become acquainted.

P. 23. *Accident gave a different direction to my wanderings.* The circumstances are related in the later editions of the *Opium-Eater* with such prolix detail as to be hardly readable or intelligible. They are thus summarized by Professor Masson: "Two days of walking carried him over the forty miles that separated Manchester from Chester [where his mother then lived]; and after some hovering about the house, of which he gives a whimsical account, the meeting took place. His mother, with her notions and habits of decorum, looked upon the occurrence 'much as she would have done upon the opening of the seventh seal in the Revelations,' but it chanced that another relative was at hand who took a lighter view of the affair. This was his uncle, Colonel Thomas Penson, his mother's only surviving brother, home from India on a three years' furlough, and quartered for the time,

with his horses and Bengalee servants, at the Priory. Colonel Penson, a kindly man of the world, saw nothing unnatural in the desire of a youth to elope from the tedium of school; and by his advice it was arranged that De Quincey, if he did not choose to remain at the Priory, should have a guinea a week allowed him for a while, with liberty to wander about and enjoy himself on that basis." Colonel Penson on several subsequent occasions behaved to De Quincey with the most signal kindness.

P. 27. *A harsh and contemptuous expression.* "I was wrong if I said anything in my anger that was disparaging or sceptical as to the Bishop's intellectual pretensions, which were not only very sound, but very appropriate to the particular stations which he filled. For the Bishop of Bangor (at that time Dr. Cleaver) was also the head of Brasenose, Oxford—which college was indebted to him for its leadership at that era in scholarship and discipline. In this academic character I learned afterwards that he might be called almost a reformer; a wise, temperate, and successful reformer; and, as a scholar, I saw many years later that he had received the laudatory notice of Porson."—*Opium-Eater*, ed. 1862, pp. 124-5.

P. 31. *Certainly, Mr. Shelley is right in his notions about old age, etc.* This passage is omitted from succeeding editions. De Quincey himself had become stricken in years before the republication of the *Opium-Eater*.

P. 32. *Means which I must omit for want of room.* Two Welsh lawyers, whose acquaintance he had made

in the Snowdon district, lent him twelve guineas for the purpose. (*Opium-Eater*, ed. 1862, p. 144.) The account of De Quincey's departure from Wales and journey to London, so slurred over here, is one of the finest passages among the additions to the *Opium-Eater*, and may be cited as a favourable example of that power of magnifying and dignifying ordinary things, and recounting trivial incidents with majestic circumlocution, which have made two hundred and seventy-five pages of small type out of two short magazine papers :—

"The day on which I left Oswestry (convoys for nearly five miles by my warm-hearted friend) was a day of golden sunshine amongst the closing days of November. As truly as Jessica's moonlight ('Merchant of Venice') this golden sunshine might be said to *sleep* upon the woods and the fields; so awful was the universal silence, so profound the death-like stillness. It was a day belonging to a brief and pathetic season of farewell summer resurrection, which, under one name or other, is known almost everywhere. In North America it is called the 'Indian Summer.' In North Germany and Midland Germany it is called the 'Old Wives' Summer,' and more rarely the 'Girls' Summer.' It is that last brief resurrection of summer in its most brilliant memorials, a resurrection that has no root in the past, nor steady hold upon the future, like the lambent and fitful gleams from an expiring lamp, mimicking what is called the 'lightning before death' in sick patients, when close upon their end. There is the feeling of a conflict that has been going

on between the lingering powers of summer and the strengthening powers of winter, not unlike that which moves by antagonist forces in some deadly inflammation, hurrying forwards through fierce struggles into the final repose of mortification. For a time the equilibrium has been maintained between the hostile forces ; but at last the antagonism is overthrown ; the victory is accomplished for the powers that fight on the side of death ; simultaneously with the conflict, the pain of conflict has departed : and thenceforward the gentle process of collapsing life, no longer fretted by counter movements, slips away with holy peace into the noiseless deeps of the Infinite. So sweet, so ghostly, in its soft, golden smiles silent as a dream, and quiet as the dying trance of a saint, faded through all its stages this departing day, along the whole length of which I bade farewell for many a year to Wales, and farewell to summer. In the very aspect and the sepulchral stillness of the motionless day, as solemnly it wore away through morning, noontide, afternoon, to meet the darkness that was hurrying to swallow up its beauty, I had a fantastic feeling as though I read the very language of resignation when bending before some irresistible agency. And at intervals I heard—in how different a key !—the raving, the everlasting uproar of that dreadful metropolis, which at every step was coming nearer, and beckoning, as it seemed, to myself for purposes as dim, for issues as incalculable, as the path of cannon-shots fired at random and in darkness.

"It was not late, but it was at least two hours after

nightfall, when I reached Shrewsbury. Was I not liable to the suspicion of pedestrianism? Certainly I was: but, even if my criminality had been more unequivocally attested than it could be under the circumstances, still there is a *locus penitentiae* in such a case. Surely a man may repent of *any* crime; and therefore of pedestrianism. I might have erred; and a court of *pie poudre* (dusty foot) might have found the evidences of my crime on my shoes. Yet secretly I might be forming good resolutions to do so no more. Certainly it looked like this, when I announced myself as a passenger 'booked' for that night's mail. This character at once installed me as rightfully a guest of the inn, however profligate a life I might have previously led as a pedestrian. Accordingly I was received with special courtesy; and it so happened that I was received with something even like pomp. Four wax-lights carried before me by obedient mutes, these were but ordinary honours, meant, as old experience had instructed me, for the first engineering step towards effecting a lodgment upon the stranger's purse. In fact the wax-lights are used by innkeepers, both abroad and at home, to 'try the range of their guns.' If the stranger submits quietly, as a good anti-pedestrian ought surely to do, and fires no counter gun by way of protest, then he is recognised at once as passively within range, and amenable to orders. I have always looked upon this fine of five or seven shillings for wax that you do not absolutely need as a sort of inaugural *honorarium* entrance-money, what in jails used to be known as *smart* money, proclaiming

me to be a man *comme il faut*; and no toll in this world of tolls do I pay so cheerfully. This, meantime, as I have said, was too customary a form to confer much distinction. The wax-lights, to use the magnificent Grecian phrase, *εραυρετε*, moved pompously before me, as the holy fire—holy fire, the inextinguishable fire and its golden hearth, moved before Caesar *semper* Augustus, when he made his official or ceremonial *avatars*. Yet still this moved along the ordinary channels of glorification: it rolled along ancient grooves: I might say, indeed, like one of the twelve Caesars when dying, *Ut puto, Deus fu* (It's my private opinion that at this very moment I am turning into a god), but still the metamorphosis was not complete. *That* was accomplished when I stepped into the sumptuous room allotted to me. It was a ball-room of noble proportions—lighted, if I chose to issue orders, by three gorgeous chandeliers, not basely wrapped up in paper, but sparkling through all their thickets of crystal branches, and flashing back the soft rays of my tall waxen lights. There were, moreover, two orchestras, which money would have filled within thirty minutes. And, upon the whole, one thing only was wanting—viz., a throne—for the completion of my *apotheosis*.

"It might be seven p.m. when first I entered upon my kingdom. About three hours later I rose from my chair, and with considerable interest looked out into the night. For nearly two hours I had heard fierce winds arising; and the whole atmosphere had by this time become one vast laboratory of hostile

movements in all directions. Such a chaos, such a distracting wilderness of dim sights, and of those awful 'sounds that live in darkness' (Wordsworth's 'Excursion'), never had I consciously witnessed. Rightly, and by a true instinct, had I made my farewell adieus to summer. All through the day, Wales and her grand mountain ranges—Penmaenmawr, Snowdon, Cader Idris—had divided my thoughts with London. But now rose London—sole, dark, infinite—brooding over the whole capacities of my heart. Other object—other thought—I could not admit. Long before midnight, the whole household, with the exception of a solitary waiter, had retired to rest. Two hours, at least, were left to me, after twelve o'clock had struck, for heart-shaking reflections. More than ever I stood upon the brink of a precipice; and the local circumstances around me deepened and intensified these reflections, impressed upon them solemnity and terror, sometimes even horror. It is all but inconceivable to men of unyielding and callous sensibilities, how profoundly others find their reveries modified and overruled by the external characters of the immediate scene around them. Many a suicide that hung dubiously in the balances has been ratified and carried into summary effect through the forlorn, soul-revolting aspect of a crazy, dilapidated home. Oftentimes, without extravagance, the whole difference between a mind that spurns life, and the same mind reconciled to life, turns upon the outside features of that particular domestic scenery which hourly besieges the eyes. I, in this

Shrewsbury hotel, naturally contemplated a group of objects tending to far different results. And yet in some respects they agreed.

"The unusual dimensions of the rooms, especially their towering height, brought up continually and obstinately, through natural links of associated feelings or images, the mighty vision of London waiting for me afar off. An altitude of nineteen or twenty feet showed itself unavoidably upon an exaggerated scale in some of the smaller side-rooms—meant probably for cards or for refreshments. This single feature of the rooms—their unusual altitude, and the echoing hollowness which had become exponent of that altitude—this one terrific feature (for terrific it was in the effect), together with crowding and evanescent images of the flying feet that so often had spread gladness through these halls on the wings of youth and hope at seasons when every room rang with music—all this, rising in tumultuous vision, whilst the dead hours of night were stealing along, all around me—household and town—sleeping, and whilst against the windows more and more the storm outside was raving, and to all appearance endlessly growing, threw me into the deadliest condition of nervous emotion under contradictory forces, high over which predominated horror recoiling from that unfathomed abyss in London into which I was now so wilfully precipitating myself. Often I looked out and examined the night. Wild it was beyond all description, and dark as 'the inside of a wolf's throat.' But at intervals, when the wind, shifting continually, swept in such a direction as to clear

away the vast curtain of vapour, the stars shone out, though with a light unusually dim and distant. Still, as I turned inwards to the echoing chambers, or outwards to the wild, wild night, I saw London expanding her visionary gates to receive me, like some dreadful mouth of Acheron (*Acherontis avary*). Thou also, Whispering Gallery ! once again in those moments of conscious and wilful desolation, didst to my ear utter monitorial sighs. For once again I was preparing to utter an irrevocable word, to enter upon one of those fatally tortuous paths of which the windings can never be unlinked.

"Such thoughts, and visions without number corresponding to them, were moving across the *camera obscura* of my fermenting fancy, when suddenly I heard a sound of wheels ; which, however, soon died off into some remote quarter. I guessed at the truth—viz., that it was the Holyhead Mail wheeling off on its primary duty of delivering its bags at the post-office. In a few minutes it was announced as having changed horses ; and off I was to London."—*Opium-Eater*, ed. 1862, pp. 148-54.

P. 33. *A large unoccupied house, of which he was tenant.* "Mr. Brunell-Brown, or Brown-Brunell, had located his hearth (if ever he had possessed one), and his household gods (when they were not in the custody of the sheriff), in Greek Street, Soho. The house was not in itself, supposing that its face had been washed now and then, at all respectable. But it wore an unhappy countenance of gloom and unsocial fretfulness, due in reality to the long neglect of painting, cleansing,

and in some instances of repairing. There were, however, no fractured panes of glass in the windows ; and the deep silence which invested the house, not only from the absence of all visitors, but also of those common household functionaries, bakers, butchers, beer-carriers, sufficiently accounted for the desolation, by suggesting an excuse not strictly true—viz., that it might be tenantless. The house already had tenants through the day, though of a noiseless order, and was destined soon to increase them. Mr. Brown-Brunell, after reconnoitring me through a narrow side-window (such as is often attached to front-doors in London), admitted me cheerfully, and conducted me, as an honoured guest, to his private *officina diplomatum* at the back of the house. From the expression of his face, but much more from the contradictory and self-counteracting play of his features, you gathered in a moment that he was a man who had much to conceal, and much, perhaps, that he would gladly forget. His eye expressed wariness against surprise, and passed in a moment into irrepressible glances of suspicion and alarm. No smile that ever his face naturally assumed, but was pulled short up by some freezing counteraction, or was chased by some close-following expression of sadness. One feature there was of relenting goodness and nobleness in Mr. Brunell's character, to which it was that subsequently I myself was most profoundly indebted for an asylum that saved my life. He had the deepest, the most liberal, and unaffected love of knowledge, but, above all, of that specific knowledge which we call literature.

His own stormy, and no doubt oftentimes disgraceful, career in life, that had entangled him in perpetual feuds with his fellow-men, he ascribed, with bitter imprecations, to the sudden interruption of his studies consequent upon his father's violent death, and to the necessity which threw him, at a boyish age, upon a professional life in the lower branches of law—threw him, therefore, upon daily temptations, by surrounding him with opportunities for taking advantages not strictly honourable, before he had formed any fixed principles at all."—*Opium-Eater*, ed. 1862, pp. 157, 158.

P. 36. *Whether this child were an illegitimate daughter of Mr. Brunell, or only a servant.* Dickens must have had the whole situation in his mind when he drew the Marchioness and Sally Brass in his "Old Curiosity Shop."

P. 49. *A Jew named D—.* "At this period (autumn of 1856), when thirty-five years have elapsed since the first publication of these memoirs, reasons of delicacy can no longer claim respect for concealing the Jew's name, or at least the name which he adopted in his dealings with the Gentiles. I say, therefore, without scruple, that the name was Dell : and some years later it was one of the names that came before the House of Commons in connection with something or other (I have long since forgotten *what*) growing out of the parliamentary movement against the Duke of York, in reference to Mrs. Clark, etc. Like all the other Jews with whom I have had negotiations, he was frank and honourable in his mode of conducting

business. What he promised, he performed; and if his terms were high as naturally they could not *but* be, to cover his risks, he avowed them from the first."—*Opium-Eater*, ed. 1862, p. 175, note.

This note must be regarded as a substitute for one in the first edition, which is accordingly omitted.

P. 55. *There had been some time before a murder committed on or near Hounslow Heath.* The name of the murdered man was Steele as stated. "Two men, Holloway and Haggerty, were long afterwards convicted, upon very questionable evidence, as the perpetrators of this murder. The main testimony against them was that of a Newgate turnkey, who had imperfectly overheard a conversation between the two men. The current impression was that of great dissatisfaction with the evidence; and this impression was strengthened by the pamphlet of an acute lawyer, exposing the unsoundness and incoherency of the statements relied upon by the court. They were executed, however, in the teeth of all opposition. And as it happened that an enormous wreck of life occurred at the execution (not fewer, I believe, than sixty persons having been trampled under foot by the unusual pressure of some brewers' draymen forcing their way with linked arms to the space below the drop), this tragedy was regarded for many years by a section of the London mob as a providential judgment upon the passive metropolis."—*Opium-Eater*, ed. 1862, p. 182, note. The execution took place on February 23, 1807. The "acute lawyer" was James Harmer, afterwards Alderman, and well known as

proprietor of the "Weekly Dispatch." Nothing is said in Mr. Harmer's pamphlet of any conversation between Holloway and Haggerty having been overheard by a turnkey. The chief evidence against them was that of a man named Hanfield, who professed to have been an accomplice, but who was suspected of having falsely accused them to get himself liberated from the hulks.

P. 58. *Vast power and possessions make a man shamefully afraid of dying.* "It will be objected that many men of the highest rank and wealth have in our own day, as well as throughout our history, been among the foremost in courting danger in battle. True; but this is not the case supposed: long familiarity with power has to them deadened its effect and its attractions."—DE QUINCEY.

P. 60. *He was himself, anonymously, an author.* The book by the elder De Quincey here referred to is an anonymous octavo volume published in London in 1775, entitled "A Short Tour in the Midland Counties of England, performed in the summer of 1772: together with an account of a similar excursion undertaken September, 1772." The greater part had previously appeared in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for May—September, 1772. "Though in the form of brief business-like notes," says Professor Masson, "the performance is altogether very creditable."

P. 63. *Most people, indeed, etc.* This sentence is omitted in subsequent editions.

P. 70. *Hid her face in her robe.* *οπμια θεσ' εσω περιλυν.* "The scholar will know that throughout this

passage I refer to the early scenes of the 'Orestes;' one of the most beautiful exhibitions of the domestic affections which even the dramas of Euripides can furnish. To the English reader it may be necessary to say that the situation at the opening of the drama is that of a brother attended only by his sister during the demoniacal possession of a suffering conscience—or, in the mythology of the play, haunted by the furies—and in circumstances of immediate danger from enemies, and of desertion or cold regard from nominal friends."—DE QUINCEY.

P. 74. *Evanesced*. "This way of going off the stage of life appears to have been well known in the 17th century, but at that time to have been considered a peculiar privilege of blood-royal, and by no means to be allowed to druggists. For about the year 1686 a poet of rather ominous name, and who, by the by, did ample justice to his name, viz., *Mr. Flatman*, in speaking of the death of Charles II., expresses his surprise that any prince should commit so absurd an act as dying; because, says he,

Kings should disdain to die, and only *disappear*.

They should *abscond*, that is, into the other world."—DE QUINCEY.

P. 76. *Die*. "Of this, however, the learned appear latterly to have doubted: for in a pirated edition of Buchan's 'Domestic Medicine,' which I once saw in the hands of a farmer's wife who was studying it for the benefit of her health, the doctor was made to say, 'Be particularly careful never to take above five and

twenty ounces of laudanum at once ;' the true reading being probably five and twenty *drops*, which are held equal to about one grain of crude opium."—DE QUINCEY.

P. 80. *Most of the unscientific authors.* " Amongst the great herd of travellers, etc., who show sufficiently by their stupidity that they never held any intercourse with opium, I must caution my reader specially against the brilliant author of 'Anastasius.' This gentleman, whose wit would lead one to presume him an opium-eater, has made it impossible to consider him in that character from the grievous misrepresentation which he gives of its effects at pp. 215-217 of vol. i. Upon consideration, it must appear such to the author himself : for, waiving the errors I have insisted on in the text, which (and others) are insisted on in the fullest manner, he will himself admit that an old gentleman 'with a snow-white beard,' who eats 'ample doses of opium,' and is yet able to deliver what is meant and received as very weighty counsel on the bad effects of that practice, is but indifferent evidence that opium either kills people prematurely, or sends them into a madhouse."—DE QUINCEY. As "Anastasius" is now but little read—though every line is worth reading—it may be well to insert the passage which provoked De Quincey's contradiction :—

"As a last and desperate resource, I tried to drive away my frightful visions by gayer dreams, the children of drowsy opium. I found my way to the great mart of that deleterious drug, the Theriakee tchartchee. There, in elegant coffee-houses, adorned

with trellised awnings, the dose of delusion is measured out to each customer according to his wishes. But lest its visitors should forget to what place they are hying, directly facing its painted porticoes stands the great receptacle of mental imbecility erected by Sultan Suleiman for the use of his capital.

"In this tchartchee might be seen any day a numerous collection of those whom private sorrows have driven to a public exhibition of insanity. There each reeling idiot might take his neighbour by the hand and say, 'Brother, and what ailed thee, to seek so dire a cure?' There did I with the rest of its familiars now take my habitual station in my solitary niche, like an insensible, motionless idol, sitting with sightless eye-balls staring on vacuity.

"One day, as I lay in less entire absence than usual under the purple vines of the porch, admiring the gold-tipped domes of the majestic Sulimanye, the appearance of an old man with a snow-white beard, reclining on the couch beside me, caught my attention. Half plunged in stupor, he every now and then burst into a wild laugh, occasioned by the grotesque phantasms which the ample dose of madjoon he had just swallowed was sending up to his brain. I sat contemplating him with mixed curiosity and dismay, when, as if for a moment roused from his torpor, he took me by the hand, and fixing on my countenance his dim vacant eyes, said in an impressive tone, 'Young man, thy days are yet few; take the advice of one who, alas! has counted many. Lose no time; hie thee hence, nor cast behind one lingering look:

but if thou hast not the strength, why tarry even here? Thy journey is but half achieved. At once go on to that large mansion before thee. It is thy ultimate destination; and by thus beginning where thou must end at last, thou mayest at least save both thy time and thy money.'

"The old man here fell back into his apathy, but I was roused effectually. I resolved to renounce the slow poison, of whose havoc my neighbour presented so woful a specimen; and in order not to preserve even a memento of the sin I abjured, presented him, as a reward for his advice, with the little golden receptacle of the pernicious drug which I used to make my solace. He took the bauble without appearing sensible of the gift, while I, running into the middle of the square, pronounced, with outstretched hands, against the execrable market where insanity was sold by the ounce, a solemn malediction.

"The curse, I believe, took effect. Certain it is that with me seemed to depart for ever the prosperity of the Theriakkee tchartchee. From the day I turned my back upon its fatal abodes, the use of wines and spirits may be said in Constantinople to have superseded that of opium. Every succeeding year has seen the trade of madjoon decline faster, and the customers of those that sell it diminish more rapidly. The old worshippers of the poppy juice have dropped off like the leaves in autumn, and no young devotees have sprung up in their stead. The preparation has not even preserved its adherents among those men of the law, formerly anxious to combine, through means of a

drug that may be taken unperceived, the pleasures of intoxication with the honours of sobriety."

P. 84. *The late Duke of Norfolk, etc.* In the edition of 1856 *by the blessing of Heaven* is altered into *wind and weather permitting*. De Quincey explains in a note that the peer intended is "that duke once so well known to the nation as the partisan friend of Fox, Burke, Sheridan, etc., at the era of the great French Revolution in 1789-93." His convivial habits were frequently the subject of caricature.

P. 86 (note). *A passage in the "Religio Medici."* "I have not the book by me at this moment to consult, but I think the passage begins :—'And even that tavern music, which makes one man merry, another mad, in me strikes a deep fit of devotion.'"—DE QUINCEY. The quotation is accurate, except that the first word should be *For*. The passage is in Part II., sect. 9.

P. 87. *A pleasure such as that with which Weld the traveller, etc.* "The women, on the contrary, speak with the utmost ease, and the language, as pronounced by them, appears as soft as the Italian. They have, without exception, the most delicate harmonious voices I ever heard, and the most pleasing gentle laugh that is possible to conceive. I have oftentimes sat amongst a group of them for an hour or two together, merely for the pleasure of listening to their conversation, on account of its wonderful softness and delicacy."—WELD, *Travels through North America*, pp. 411, 412. It is probably for the reason indicated by De Quincey that his editor has thought

Finnish the most musical language he ever heard spoken.

P. 99, l. 16. *A very melancholy event.* The death of Wordsworth's little daughter Catherine, to whom De Quincey was tenderly attached.

P. 99, l. 23. *A most appalling irritation of the stomach . . . on which, as respects my own self-justification, the whole of what follows may be said to hinge.*

Dr. Eatwell, in an essay on the medical aspects of De Quincey's case, appended to Page's memoir, endeavours to demonstrate that in these sufferings of the stomach were all the symptoms of a disease called *Gastrodynia*, well known in India, for which opium is the specific. As De Quincey advanced in life, this disease, he holds, became more and more subdued, so that he was enabled to overcome the craving for the opium which had at first allayed the pain from the gnawing of the disease. De Quincey's apology is further supported by the testimony of Berlioz, who says of his own father :—"Mon père, depuis longtemps, souffre d'une incurable maladie de l'estomac, qui l'a cent fois mis aux portes du tombeau. Il ne mange presque pas. L'usage constant et de jour en jour plus considérable de l'opium ranime seul aujourd'hui ses forces épuisées. Il y a quelques années, découragé par les douleurs atroces qu'il ressentait, il prit à la fois trente-deux grains d'opium. 'Mais je t'avoue,' me dit-il plus tard en me racontant le fait, 'que ce n'était pas pour me guérir.' Cette effroyable dose de poison, au lieu de le tuer comme il l'espérait, dissipa presque immédiatement ses souffrances

et le rendit momentanément à la santé." The "dose effroyable," according to De Quincey's calculation, would be equivalent to 800 drops, or 200 under the amount which (p. 105) he speaks of as a trifle.

P. 104. *Eight thousand drops of laudanum.* "I here reckon twenty-five drops of laudanum as equivalent to one grain of opium, which I believe is the common estimate. However, as both may be considered variable quantities (the crude opium varying much in strength, and the tincture still more), I suppose that no infinitesimal accuracy can be had in such a calculation. Teaspoons vary as much in size as opium in strength. Small ones hold about 100 drops: so that 8000 drops are about eighty times a teaspoonful. The reader sees how much I keep within Dr. Buchan's indulgent allowance."—DE QUINCEY.

P. 109. *I became convinced that he was used to opium.* "This, however, is not a necessary conclusion: the varieties of effect produced by opium on different constitutions are infinite. A London magistrate (Harriott's 'Struggles through Life,' vol. iii., p. 391, third edition) has recorded that on the first occasion of his trying laudanum for the gout he took forty drops, the next night sixty, and on the fifth night eighty without any effect whatever, and this at an advanced age."—DE QUINCEY.

P. 120. *Reading is an accomplishment of mine.* See Woodhouse's notes of De Quincey's conversation, printed in this volume, for an impartial and less favourable estimate of his proficiency as a reader. The

silvery tone of his voice in ordinary discourse is generally attested : though Mr. Bohn says that "he always seemed to speak in a kind of whisper."

P. 123. *The utter feebleness of the main herd of modern economists, etc.* These vehement expressions of disdain are almost wholly omitted from subsequent editions. In an article in the "London Magazine" for March, 1824, De Quincey thus apologises for the introduction of Ricardo into the Opium-Eater :—"For this, as for some other passages, I was justly attacked by an able and liberal critic in the 'New Edinburgh Review,' as for so many absurd irrelevancies : in that situation no doubt they were so ; and of this, in spite of the haste in which I had written the greater part of the book, I was fully aware. However, as they said no more than what was true, I was glad to take that, or any occasion which I could invent, for offering my public testimony of gratitude to Mr. Ricardo. The truth is, I thought that something might occur to intercept any more appropriate mode of conveying my homage to Mr. Ricardo's ear, which should else more naturally have been expressed in a direct work on political economy. This fear was at length realized—not in the way I had apprehended, viz., by my own death, but by Mr. Ricardo's. And now, therefore, I felt happy that, at whatever price of good taste, I had in some imperfect way made known my sense of his high pretensions—although, unfortunately, I had given him no means of judging whether my applause were of any value. For during the interval between September, 1821, and Mr. Ricardo's death in September, 1823, I

had found no leisure for completing my work on political economy." The disinterested enthusiasm for intellectual beauty which led De Quincey, at some sacrifice of symmetry and propriety, to introduce Ricardo into the Opium-Eater, manifests one of the most prepossessing features of his own character.

P. 125. *My "Prolegomena."* This unfinished work does not seem capable of identification either with De Quincey's "Logic of Political Economy" (1844) or his papers on the subject in "Blackwood's Magazine" for 1842.

P. 130. *I was once told by a near relative of mine.* His mother, as the editor is informed by Mrs. Baird Smith.

P. 133. *A set of plates by Piranesi, called his "Dreams."* Piranesi never published any plates under this title, but many of his architectural drawings, though professedly representing actual edifices, are as visionary as Martin's views of Pandemonium. Charles Brockden Brown, after Hawthorne and Poe the most imaginative of American writers of fiction, was also fond of designing wholly ideal architecture in drawings of most elaborate execution.

P. 135. *From a great modern poet.* "The Excursion," book ii., near the end.

P. 136. *Homer is reputed to have known the virtues of opium.* "This idea is grounded on the passage in the Odyssey (bk. iv.), where Helen is represented as administering to Telemachus, in the house of Menelaus, a potion prepared from *nepenthes*, which made him forget his sorrows. It was evidently

some narcotic, but is generally thought to have been an extract of hemp, which Galen says was given in his time to guests at banquets as a promoter of hilarity and enjoyment. Hippocrates was acquainted with the use of opium in medicine, and frequently prescribed it."—COOKE, *The Seven Sisters of Sleep*, ch. ii. The Homeric nepenthes is the subject of a learned disquisition in Gronovius, tom. ii., by Petrus La Seine, who arrives at the extraordinary conclusion that it was *aurum potabile*.

P. 145. *When we were both children.* In the original MS. this was succeeded by the following passage, which was immediately cancelled by the writer, and has never appeared in any edition of the Opium-Eater. I am enabled to insert it here by the exceeding kindness of Mr. H. A. Page :—

"This dream at first brought tears to one who had been long familiar only with groans : but afterwards it fluctuated and grew unsteady : the passions and the scenery changed countenance, and the whole was transposed into another key. Its variations, though interesting, I must omit.

"At length I grew afraid to sleep, and I shrunk from it as from the most savage torture. Often I fought with my drowsiness, and kept it aloof by sitting up the whole night and following day. Sometimes I lay down only in the day-time : and sought to charm away the phantoms by requesting my family to sit around me and to talk : hoping thus to derive an influence from what affected me externally into my internal world of shadows : but, far from this, I in-

sected and stained as it were the whole of my waking experience with feelings derived from sleep. I seemed indeed to live and to converse even when awake with my visionary companions much more than with the realities of life. 'Oh, X, what do you see? dear X, what is it that you see?' was the constant exclamation of M[argaret], by which I was awakened as soon as I had fallen asleep, though to me it seemed as if I had slept for years. My groans had, it seems, wakened her, and, from her account, they had commenced immediately on my falling asleep.

"The following dream, as an impressive one to me, I shall close with: it grew up under the influence of that misery which I have described above as resulting from the almost paralytic incapacity to do anything towards completing my intellectual labours, combined with a belief which at the time I reasonably entertained that I should soon be called on to quit for ever this world and those for whom I still clung to it.

"As a final specimen," etc., as printed, except that the words "from 1820" do not appear in the original MS.

P. 149. *I triumphed*. I am indebted for the following valuable note to De Quincey's biographer, Mr. H. A. Page, who is probably better acquainted with his circumstances than any but his very nearest relatives:—

"Accusations have been repeatedly made of late years against De Quincey for having asserted that he had made a final escape from the thralldom of opium, when such was not the case. This charge has been

raised by writers otherwise favourable to him, and who should have been better informed. The chief cause of the misunderstanding is easily discovered. It arose from the very inadequate manner in which De Quincey, then only a few years before his death, was able to fulfil the task of expanding the Confessions as they stood at first into a volume the size of the series which Mr. James Hogg had happily been successful in getting him to put together as the 'Collected Works.' The original version is consistent with itself in all essential points: the later and enlarged version hardly is. Unless in the case of a very attentive reader, who has clearly in his mind the circumstances under which it was done, and is able to distinguish as he reads between the original and the added matter, difficulties and questionings are sure to arise about several matters of fact. De Quincey dovetailed matter here and there into the book without carefully revising and rewriting the original portions as he should have done. The result is that in the earlier portion of the book we find him speaking of himself as a person who has had upwards of fifty years' experience of opium, and still indulging in it to a moderate extent, whereas at the end he speaks of himself as having attained a complete escape. He repeats, with merely the change of 'seventeen' into 'eighteen,' the passage in the first edition where he had said, 'The moral of the narrative is addressed to the opium-eater, and therefore of necessity limited in its application. If he is taught to fear and tremble enough has been effected. But he may say that the

issue of my case is at least a proof that opium, after an eighteen years' use and an eight years' abuse of its powers, may still be renounced.' If the moral of the 'Confessions of an Opium-Eater' is dependent on the fact of his having attained a complete escape from the power of the drug, then the final Confessions can really boast no moral even of the most limited application, since De Quincey, though he greatly reduced his doses, took opium up to the end of his days,—a fact which he very ingenuously confesses over and over again. The truth is, that the moral which he allowed to remain tacked to the Confessions as enlarged in 1856 is, like too many other morals tacked to less real narratives of pain and sorrow, utterly out of place and misleading, and should have been cancelled altogether. What he wrote at the close of the Confessions of 1821 was quite true of his condition at the time, but his after-career presents a series of almost incredible fluctuations. We find him in 1855 giving express dates to four separate and signal prostrations under the influence of opium; the first in 1813-14; the second in 1817-18; the third in 1823-24; and the fourth in the period between 1841 and 1844 in Edinburgh or Glasgow. The record of the first two we have in the original Confessions; for the others we must refer to other documents. The struggle of 1843-44 was severe. He had again risen almost to his old excess in 1813-14; but by dint of daily exercise and resolution he somewhat suddenly reduced his dose to one hundred drops. 'Effects so dreadful and utterly un conjectured by medical men succeeded, that I

was glad to get back under shelter. Not the less I persisted, silently, surely descended the ladder, and suddenly found my mind as if whirled round on its true centre. It was as if a man had been in a whirlpool, carried violently by a headlong current, and before he could speak or think he was riding at anchor once more dull and untroubled as in days of infancy.' In June, 1844, he succeeded in attaining a final *comparative* escape from opium, having brought his daily quantum down to six grains. 'I would not say, by any means,' observes his daughter, 'that he never exceeded this afterwards, but I am very sure he never much exceeded it.' There are no more records of such struggles as those of 1817-18, and of 1844, though in 1848 he made a bold attempt to abstain totally: the general result of which is to be found in Page's memoir, vol. i., p. 354. He persevered for sixty-one days, but was compelled to return to his moderate dose, from which he never afterwards departed, as life otherwise was found to be insupportable. He resumed it on his own deliberate judgment, as of two evils very much the least. And not only did he justify the moderate indulgence in his own case, but he formulated a kind of general doctrine on the subject, which he thus summed up at p. 242 of the Confessions of 1856:—'Nervous irritation is the secret desolation of human life, and for this there is probably no adequate controlling power but that of opium, taken daily under steady regulation.' If moral the final Confessions must have, then the pressure of facts would seem to point to this as the true one,

rather than to any kind of 'triumph' or total abstinence. 'Once in the toils of opium, reduce your dose to the very minimum, and keep it so by careful regulation and outdoor exercise,' seem really to be the terms in which the moral of De Quincey's life as opium-eater would express itself.

"The latter years of his life were spent either in Edinburgh or at Lasswade, in great comfort and quietness, with his daughters, who carefully tended him."

It should be added, that the appendix to the original edition of the Confessions, in which De Quincey rather apologises for having conveyed to the reader "the impression that I had wholly renounced the use of opium," is omitted in the enlarged edition. He may have thought that he was supplying its absence by describing his "escape" as "a provisional stage, that paved the way subsequently for many milder stages, to which gradually my constitutional system accommodated itself."

P. 150. *The most innocent sufferer.* "William Lithgow: his book (Travels, etc.) is ill and pedantically written: but the account of his own sufferings on the rack at Malaga is overpoweringly affecting."—DE QUINCEY.

P. 163. *A pretty rapid course of descent.* "On which last notice I would remark that mine was too rapid."—DE QUINCEY. He adds a diary of the amount taken during five weeks, apparently in 1821, which fluctuates from 50 to 350 drops per diem. The average is 108 drops. For four days the amount

is not stated, and on four none was taken. When Woodhouse knew De Quincey a few months later, he had reduced his daily allowance to "about eighty drops."

P. 171. *Scarcely any book has more narrowly escaped destruction.* The only mention of De Musset's translation in English up to the present time, so far as I know, is to be found in a review of Mr. Page's life of De Quincey in the "Times" for Aug. 27, 1877, written by Colonel Yule, and kindly pointed out to me by the author. Colonel Yule was at the time unaware that the translation had been recovered, and was consequently unable to give any specimen of it.

P. 184. *Mes gens.* She has forgotten that she lived as it were in a tomb, seeing no one but Lord C—— and the duenna.

NOTES ON DE QUINCEY'S CONVERSATIONS.

P. 195. *He set up a periodical work in conjunction with one of Mr. Spencer's daughters.* According to De Quincey's early friend Mr. Grinfield, *apud* Page, this periodical was entitled "The Observer." While at Mr. Spencer's academy De Quincey also competed for a prize offered for the best translation of the twenty-second ode of the third book of Horace, by the conductors of a magazine entitled "The Juvenile Library." He gained the third prize, the first being won by another youth of precocious genius, Leigh Hunt. In our judgment, it should have been awarded to De Quincey, whose version is as follows. ("Juvenile Library," vol. i., pp. 349-50.)

THIRD PRIZE TRANSLATION OF HORACE, ODE 22, LIB. I.

BY THOMAS QUINCEY, AGED 15.
Of Mr. Spencer's Academy, Winckfield, Wilts.

FUSCUS I the man whose heart is pure,
Whose life unsullied by offence,

Needs not the jav'lines of the Moor
In his defence.

Should he o'er Lybia's burning sands
Fainting pursue his breathless way,
No bow he'd seek to arm his hands
Against dismay.

Quivers of poisoned shafts he'd scorn,
Nor, though unarmed, would feel a dread
To pass where Caucasus forlorn
Rears his huge head.

In his own conscious worth secure,
Fearless he'd roam amidst his foes,
Where fabulous Hydaspes pure,
Romantic flows.

For late as in the Sabine wood
Singing my Lalage I strayed,
Unarmed I was, a wolf there stood ;
He fled afraid.

Larger than which one ne'er was seen
In warlike Daunia's beechen groves,
Nor yet in Juba's land, where e'en
The lion roves.

Send me to dreary barren lands
Where never summer zephyrs play,
Where never sun dissolves the bands
Of ice away :

Send me again to scorching realms
Where not one cot affords a seat,
And where no shady pines or elms
Keep off the heat :

In every clime, in every isle,
Me Lalage shall still rejoice ;
I'll think of her enchanting smile
And of her voice.

ATTESTATION.

The foregoing is the unassisted translation of Master Thomas Quincey, a student in this academy, under the age of fifteen years.

EDW. SPENCER,
Rector of Winkfield, Wilts.

June 3, 1800.

The "Juvenile Library" has also prize compositions by T. L. Peacock, W. J. Fox, and others who became celebrated in mature life.

P. 196. *It was from this school that he took his departure so unceremoniously.* Woodhouse must of course have misunderstood De Quincey, as the school from which he absconded was the Manchester Grammar School.

P. 201. *Taylor's pamphlet.* "The Restoration of National Prosperity shown to be immediately practicable." By the author of "Junius Identified" [*i.e.* John Taylor]. London, 1821.

P. 202. *Lloyd is the author of some novels.* He does not appear to have published more than one, "Edmund Oliver," printed at Bristol in 1798, and dedicated to Charles Lamb. It is a novel with a purpose, "written," says the author, "with the design of counteracting that generalizing spirit which seems so much to have insinuated itself among modern philosophers." Godwin is the writer chiefly combated. It is eloquent, impassioned, and although, as De Quincey says, somewhat too sentimental, on the whole a work of considerable merit. "The incidents relative to the army," it is stated, "were given me by an intimate friend." Coleridge is no doubt the person indicated, but there seems no other ground for considering him to be introduced into the book.

P. 208. *It will afford some general idea of the tenor of his conversation and of the richness of his mind.* De Quincey says himself of his talents for conversation: "Having the advantage of a prodigious memory, and the far greater advantage of a logical instinct for feeling in a moment the secret analogies or parallelisms that connected things else apparently remote, I enjoyed these two peculiar gifts for conversation: first, an inexhaustible fertility of topics, and therefore of resources for illustrating or for varying any subject that chance or purpose suggested; secondly, a prematurely awakened sense of *art* applied to conversation."—*Opium Eater*, ed. 1862, p. 135.

P. 213. *Either Christmas or New Year's Eve.* De Quincey's memory deceived him. The child died on June 5, 1812.

P. 218. *The notice in the "Literary Gazette" of Keats.* This remarkable piece of criticism appeared in the "Literary Gazette" of December 8, 1821, and certainly merits the palm among all the disgraceful reviews of the period for stupidity as regards Shelley and brutality as regards Keats. It begins, "We have already given some of our columns to this writer's merits, and we will not now repeat our convictions of his incurable absurdity. . . . Adonais is an elegy on a foolish young man, who, after writing some volumes of very weak, and in the greater part of very indecent poetry, died some time since of a consumption, the breaking down of an infirm constitution having in all probability been accelerated by the discarding his neckcloth. . . . We give a verse at random, premising that there is *no story* in the elegy" (!).

P. 219. *Wilson had sent him Shelley's "Revolt of Islam."* The review, written by Wilson, but as it now appears inspired by De Quincey, was published in "Blackwood" for January, 1819, and, with the subsequent notices of "Alastor" and "Prometheus Unbound" in the same periodical, is by far the worthiest recognition that Shelley's genius received in his lifetime.

P. 225. *The first of the series of letters he was about to write for the "London Magazine."* The "Letters to a young man whose education has been neglected;" in which, however, the relation of thought and language is not discussed.

P. 230. *B— in Dryden's "Satires of Mac-Flecknoe."* There must be some mistake in Wood-

house's report. No "B—" is introduced into "Mac-Flecnoc," nor is Burnet alluded to. He is satirized as the Buzzard in "The Hind and the Panther."

P. 236. *Many different reports were abroad on the subject.* Mr. Grinfield, De Quincey's early friend, at this time a member of Lincoln College, says: "I rather incline to believe that he had some distrust of his own presence of mind, feeling that his intellect was somewhat impatient of grappling with the smaller points which are demanded in a university examination." Dr. Goodenough of Christ Church, who was one of the examiners, declared to a member of Worcester College: "You have sent us the cleverest man I ever met with; if his *vivâ voce* examination to-morrow correspond with what he has done to-day, he will carry everything before him."

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